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M E M O I R S

OF

LADY. HARRIOT BUTLER.

I Remained for a long time lost in the most profound reverie; my heart was cruelly tortured by the idea of ingratitude, of which I fancied myself guilty towards one of the kindest and most generous of mankind. Vainly did I strive to persuade myself that I only encreased his happiness by concealing my real sentiments. I could not internally acquit myself of perfidy towards him. So sincere a passion as his, merited at least my confidence. Why then should I leave him in a delusion, from whence he must one day awake? It was then, for the first time, I felt that tumultous sensation, which arises from a consciousness of guilt. I wished to love my Lord *W*—— as I had loved Lord

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B***;

*B****; but a love which had even taught me if I may so express it, to know my own existence, had struck too deep root in my heart to be eradicated. The most tender remembrance painted my lover in such flattering colours, that my whole soul fled after the pleasing delusion. I even, at times, reproached myself for my attempts to resist a passion which was so dear to me.

THE passion of Lord *W*—— afflicted me. I could have wish'd that he had only that friendship for me which I conceived for him. At length, in order to get rid of this anxiety, I resolved to make him a confession of the state of my heart, in hopes that he thus might repay my candour only with friendship. I can assure you, Madam, that his title, fortune, or grandeur, never made the least impression on me. Born with great tenderness and sensibility, my heart alone always determined my happiness or misery. Much more happy, undoubtedly, if ambition or vanity had sometimes divided its emotions.

CARDS being over, the company adjourned to supper. I soon perceived the ridicule of situations, in which the civilities and the forms were almost constantly the same. I only admired how it was possible that people who seem'd earnest in lowering each other, should yet seek each other's company with eagerness, and seem pleased at finding themselves together. For I found the distrusts of Mrs. *Clairville* was a passion general to all. I perceived hints thrown out from every quarter, looks of inquisitive

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sitive curiosity fixed upon me, and innuendos of which I perfectly knew the intent. Mrs. *Clairville* had levied all the world into an opposition, and every creature now took measures to teach my aunt humility. There was not a lady of the company that could forgive her the honour of his Lordship's visit. They who praised my figure, and complimented my beauty, seem'd only to play an under part to Mrs. *Clairville*. The men, tho' old praised me without the least reserve; and a repartee, or two, which I made Mrs. *Clairville* turned the laugh against her, and brought them all over to my side.

I HAVE thus expatiated upon my first reception, only to give you an idea of the family in which I was placed. I have naturally too great an aversion to those little instances of envy and hypocrisy, to detain you long in the description.

THE next morning *Henry* brought me a letter from his Lordship, written in *English*. He gave me a circumstantial account of the care he took in ascertaining my fortune. I saw with astonishment and pleasure, that the debt of twenty thousand crowns, which I mentioned in the beginning of this narrative, was acknowledged and paid by the son of him who had denied it to my father. There is still then, cried I, probity and honour among men. His Lordship, continually employ'd in serving me seem'd almost to forget himself. He was charmed with the idea that I was found as amiable by others as by him. In how forcible a

manner did he not describe his passion! such was his delicacy, his breeding, that he even dignified my self-love by his regards; his virtues open'd with such a gradual lustre, that I even sigh'd to find it impossible that my heart already prepossessed with love, could not follow where I had placed my esteem.

WHATEVER care I took to flatter my own weakness, I could not conceal from myself the superiority of his Lordship's tenderness and generosity over that of my former lover. Alas, said I to myself, in the very midst of solitude, my Lord B*** preferred ambition to me, even without knowing what ambition was, while Lord W——, surrounded with all that fortune can bestow, is faithful to me alone. What assiduity, what a return of passion should I not expect from a man to whom I sacrifice so noble, so generous a rival? I still love, I have encountered every inconvenience in pursuit of my passion, and yet it has been hitherto unsuccessful. Perhaps my lover even now in the arms of another——Ah, Madam! I was unable to support so mortifying an idea; I shuddered at the very apprehension, and found that his infidelity would have plunged me in the very depths of despair. No, Lord W——, cried I, as if he had been present, no, I cannot cease to love Lord B***, though he should prove the most inconstant of his sex: but you shall know it; I will no longer feed your passion with falsehood. You must be my friend; I feel in my breast something that tells me we must not part. My sentiments of friendship

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are worthy of the object on which they are placed.

I WALKED out agitated with all these reflexions, when I was informed of a visit from the spiritual director, who expected my company in my aunt's apartment. I arm'd myself with a coldness and severity, which the gravity of my character, with an exalted and noble air, enabled me to support, notwithstanding my natural softness. I gave him a clear and simple exposition of the principles of morality, in which I had been educated, and the effects of them in regulating my conduct, and assisting my devotions.

I MUST own he talk'd upon this occasion with as much eloquence as the subject could admit; but in all he said, I found more eloquence than argument, more solicitude to shew his own parts than to make me a convert. I answer'd him coldly, that I would reflect at leisure upon the many great truths he had been expounding; and left him, not a little pleased to get rid of this disagreeable conversation.

THE hour for going to the play being come Lord *W*—— made his appearance. I felt an emotion, as I sat near him, that I had never experienced before. I saw he was transported to find me look so charming; and, by the joy which sparkled in his eyes, I perceived that he attributed my blushes and confusion to a wrong motive. I am going to lose, perhaps, cried he approaching me, the happy preference you yesterday made me, in so distinguishing a manner. What you are going to see, will prob-

bably draw your attention from me. No, my Lord, replied I, gravely, nothing shall lessen the sentiments I entertain of your Lordship and which you more than merit.

AFTER my dress had undergone a review from my aunt, and she had found it perfectly in taste we stepped into his Lordship's carriage. Neither his entreaties nor mine could prevail with her to let her daughter be one of the party. This cruel mother was resolved to make her suffer all the hardships of servitude, before she was to have her liberty by marriage.

I OWN, Madam, that I was perfectly dazzled with what I saw. I could never have supported the gaze of such numbers, had not his Lordship encouraged me; indeed his assiduity was sufficient to convince me of my own merit, since, in the whole crowd, there did not appear one so graceful, or so richly dressed as he was.

How industrious is vanity to adorn itself even in what is not its due! I fancied myself ennobled by the magnificence of his Lordship. Several gentlemen of his acquaintance flew to embrace him, and all seem'd surpriz'd at my beauty: but I suppose my being a stranger, gave additional lustre to my charms. Each expressed his feelings with that elegance and ease, which a knowledge of the polite world always confers. Soon an hundred glasses were levelled at me. The women themselves, tho' with reluctance, seem'd to join in the universal buz which my appearance had produced. Tho' I was never vain, I own to you, Madam, I first
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felt that pleasure, that giddy rapture, which self-love, confirmed by universal applause, is apt to produce. And yet my aunt was more enraptured even than I. It was indeed amusing enough to observe what airs she assumed, as if she had at least half a share in all the admiration that was bestowed on me. For my own part, not knowing the actual source of my joy, I attributed it to novelty; for we are very tender of ascribing our actions to the real causes even upon examining ourselves. I found all the men who addressed me extremely amiable; their looks, in which I read the power of my own charms, gave me a satisfaction that I was unable to account for. Modesty is only the distrust of self-love, when it would endeavour to please, and is apprehensive of not succeeding: my success gave me assurance. Tho' favourably prejudiced with regard to the men, I could however readily perceive several petitmaitres among the number, the folly of which class had already so much disgusted me in my coxcomical cousin; but it was not long before I was able to distinguish between flat insipidity and easy politeness. My Lord also pointed out to me several ladies whose happy delicacies, finely concealed, diffused inexpressible charms in all their words and actions.

THO' in a manner hurried from myself, and confused with all I saw, I soon perceived that Lord B**** was not there. My eager eyes sought him in a crowd, which, when I could not find him, I no longer regarded. The play began, and entirely devoted to the delusions of fancy,

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fancy, I felt, with the truest sensibility, whatever passions the poet thought fit to inspire. Heavens! cried I, when the act was finished how do I lament the unfortunate princess! who can save her from the threatening calamity? Lord *W*— could not avoid smiling at my simplicity; and I, for my own part, was surprized how any could be spectators of such scenes without emotion. Yet all that I saw only contributed to represent my lover in still more seducing colours, and paint his image more strongly on my heart. I threw my eyes once more around, rather to lose my thoughts in dissipation, than to see what I despaired of finding.

UPON turning to a particular box, what did I not feel! a cloud seem'd to swim before my sight: just going to cry out, Oh heavens, it is he, it is he himself! the voice forsook my trembling lips, I lost my breath, a deadly paleness covered my face. Lord *W*—, who soon perceived it, ask'd me the cause, with such earnestness, that I soon recovered. But still my eyes were immoveably fix'd upon the box in which I saw my Lord *B****. Alas, Madam, I found his regards steadfastly fixed on the Princess of *C*—. An emotion of sorrow, for which I could not account, seem'd to foretel all the misfortunes which were to succeed. The Princess, fixing her eyes upon me, drew the attention of her lover to the same place. I only saw him astonished at finding me there. Far from running, with transport, to me, as I expected, he seem'd confused, ashamed, and embarrassed;

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barrassed; nor could his eyes dare to meet mine. A thousand times was I going, insensible of all decorum, to fly to the place where he sat: a thousand times did my looks reproach his insensibility. He seem'd apprehensive of my design; and in order to prevent what he knew was incompatible with his present professions and views, he came, in an indolent manner, and with a sauntering air, in order to cover his embarrassment, to salute Lord *W*——, who was sitting by me. At every step he approached, the beatings of my heart redoubled. Freezing and burning by turns, my soul was in such agitation, that I was unable too look at him. I was lost in a kind of extacy, which deprived me of my senses. I however recover'd them too soon; and grief and despair took possession of my heart, never to leave it but with life. The usual compliments having passed between Lord *W*—— and Lord *B****, the latter made me a cold indifferent bow, as to one with whom he had no acquaintance. Would you believe it, Madam, he had the assurance to ask his Lordship who I was? while I, regardless of his seeming inconstancy, but following the dictates of tenderness, answered with a trembling voice, “Ah, my Lord! don't you know me?”—Alas, the inconstant still affected to keep his countenance; and, no way moved by this sincere and innocent expression of my love, he turned from me, and disappeared in an instant.

I REMAINED struck with grief and shame, and Lord *W*—— in astonishment. The second

cond act began, without either of us being in a capacity of enjoying it. After having twenty times changed colour, a torrent of tears found passage, and gave some alleviation to my feelings. I sat backward in the box, and hid my face with my handkerchief, to give myself up wholly to my grief. Lord *W*—— approached me trembling; “I too well know, said he the cause of those tears. Alas, continued he, in the very moment I perceive my own loss, I yet feel a new sorrow for your affliction. Your tears go to my heart; but I beseech you restrain them. I tremble for the consequence, if the world should learn a secret which they”——Alas, my Lord, replied I, you are now revenged: but, for heaven’s sake, do not detest me; you are the only friend I have left on earth. God is my witness, I never design’d to deceive you. You shall soon know all, if I have strength enough remaining to relate it. His Lordship, instead of giving way to reproaches, or letting me see any marks of the anger I dreaded, only regarded me with an air of grief; and fetching a deep sigh, entreated me to put on such an appearance, at least, of serenity, as might conceal my inquietude.

MADAME *de Volancourt*, concerned only about making a proper figure, and being seated in the same box with his Lordship, scarce perceived any thing of what passed. As soon as the second act was finished, several gentlemen came to rally me on my sensibility. They fancied that my eyes still bathed in tears, were marks of my sympathy with the distress that

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was represented. His Lordship, to shorten a discourse which he knew was painful to me, gave a turn to the conversation. Thus, madam, this day, which had opened with such a promising aspect closed upon my future happiness, and shew'd me what it was to be indeed wretched.

THE little Marquis of H——, so universally admired for his wit and humour, exhausted all his talents of ridicule in describing the passion of the Princess of C—— for Lord B***. Egad, my Lord, said he to Lord W——, there is not a true *Frenchman* of us all that will not be confounded at the victories your countrymen gain over our ladies. The greatest coquet in all *France*, the most bewitching, the most insensible,—a woman who has filled the whole city with the rumour of her conquests——, this very woman is subdued by an *Englishman*; by my Lord B***. She is in love to distraction. Far from blushing at her defeat, she glories in it, proclaims it, and is never seen without him. If she ever listens to another, it is only to make him an immediate sacrifice. All *Paris* is sensible of Lord B***'s success, and I fancy the whole city will soon rise up in arms, to vindicate its honour. Faith, Madam, we begin to suspect also, that you have made an ugly piece of work here. We all remark'd the looks of the Princess while my Lord was in your company, and his confusion upon leaving you. Take care you do not bring the Princess and her whole house upon your head. May I perish but the poor
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boy has been taken to task. He swears, protests, and sighs, to regain her confidence: but we have observed, that she does not seem willing to forgive his having too curiously approached your box: And indeed, what can be more unpardonable, than to quit one woman, in order to look at another who is more beautiful?

GUESS what were my sensations, Madam, during a recital, every word of which was daggers to my heart. And is it true that my adored Lord B * * * is faithless? I fixed my eyes upon her whose charms were so fatal to me: And oh! how beautiful did she appear! I found no longer any consolation for my distress. Lord B * * * seem'd intoxicated with the pleasure of reading in her looks the affection with which she regarded him. At this instant, in which I could have wished to hate him, in which shame and envy filled my soul with the most cruel emotions, he never appeared in my eyes so handsome, he never assumed an air so bewitching. That tender and engaging manner, with which I saw he endeavoured to recover her confidence, recalled to my despairing heart the idea of that love which once constituted all my happiness; of which I was now no longer the object; and of which I was doomed to be the unhappy victim. How happy would one of those glances, which were lavish'd on my rival, have made me! But the ungrateful man did not deign to cast a single look at me, while my eyes were never satisfied with admiring him, all inconstant as he was.

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I DID not perceive all the horrors of my situation until it appeared by Lord B***'s retiring. "Then all is over, exclaimed I, I have lost him for ever." Lord W——, that tender and generous lover, too attentive, for his own happiness, to all I felt, fearing the consequences of my distress, proposed to Madame de Volancourt to leave the house. He easily persuaded her that people of distinction never sat out a whole play. Trembling, despairing, scarce able to support myself, I was helped into the coach.

My aunt, quite charmed with all the fine folks she had seen, continued to talk with a volubility which neither his Lordship nor I attempted to interrupt, of the brilliant figure she had once made at court. But alas, continued she, with a sigh, I have given these vanities over, and have made a sacrifice of this world to the next. During her rhodomontade of grandeur and devotion, his Lordship and I, like two criminals, with down-cast eyes, only interrupted her with our sighs. When we were returned, Lord W—— readily accepted an invitation to supper.

THE man who travels in search of happiness often seems to take a pleasure in what most leads him from the pursuit. His Lordship seem'd as earnest to hear a recital which promised to banish all his hopes, as he could have appeared to receive a confession of a passion as tender as his own. My aunt, who was to write some letters that could not be deferred, left us but too much at liberty.

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As soon as I found myself alone with his Lordship, a cold sweat covered my face. I sunk back into my chair almost without sense. The tender concern with which he endeavoured to soften my distress, brought me to myself, and I then gave full vent to my tears. Ah, my Lord, cried I, in a complaining accent, all my happiness is at an end! how unworthy am I of an heart like yours! And yet I never deceived you; ——— For heaven's sake, cried he, in a moving accent, and which redoubled my grief, deign to give me some explanation of a mystery in which I know that my happiness is but too much concerned. A passion so pure, so sincere as mine, at least deserves your confidence. Ah, my Lord, cried I, I never desired to hide from you the secrets of this heart, which I could wish was yours. The God of truth, whom I adore, is my witness, that my silence was only owing to my fear of giving you uneasiness. Since you desire it, my Lord, hear then the cause of my distress. To none on earth but you would I make a confession, because no other than you possesses my esteem. To you I would wish to give my heart, for none so well deserves it; but that, the most ungrateful man upon earth is already in possession of, and holds a place there, in spite of all my efforts to tear him from it. O heavens, cried he, your despair raises you still higher in my esteem. And is it now, at this moment of grief and affliction, in which I am going to lose you; is it now that I am to know the value of your merit? Pursue, Madam,

cried

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cried he with a feeble voice, pursue a recital which kills me, but which still serves to encrease my admiration.

I KNOW not how I had strength to go thro' a recital, every part of which forced from him a sigh. I cruelly afflicted a man who adored me, to whom I was so much obliged, and who would have sacrificed his life to serve me. But his fatal curiosity was desirous of knowing every particular of the misfortunes, which we both were so sensibly to feel. When I had complied with his request, as well as my tears and sighs would give me leave, with his arms crossed, and his eyes directed upwards; Ah heavens, cried he, and is it thus you recompence virtue? Shall those sentiments so pure, and inspired by you alone; shall such candour and innocence be betrayed? The most beautiful soul you ever formed is a prey to the basest of men. How happy is he, continued Lord W——, addressing to me, with a fury which made me tremble, how happy is the wretch so unworthy your regards, whom still you adore, whom you prefer to all the rest of mankind! Were it not that you love him, I should soon put an end to his worthless life: But, Madam, cried he, after a silence of some moments, you tell me that he has virtues which are not unworthy yours; happy shall I be, if, before I leave this world, which I detest, I can shew you how far the excess of a passion, inspired by you, can proceed. In short, as if he had forgotten that I was the cause of his distress, he seemed sensible only of mine. Dry up your tears,

tears, cried this generous lover. Weep no more, and let not your aunt see the least trace of sorrow on your countenance. It is not for a soul like hers to know a heart like yours. Your very virtues would soon be imputed to you as crimes; your innocence would undo you.

So much generosity depressed me still lower. I detested my unfortunâte passion; and declared to his Lordship how gladly I could have torn it from my breast; but this in such a manner as must convince him that he could never have a place there. No, Madam, no, added he, this world no longer has charms for me; you are the cause of my misery, and yet I do not accuse you; it is such as I was not fated to avoid; grant heaven that your fortune may be more happy than mine.

SUPPER put an end to this melancholy conversation. By my Lord's advice, I pretended a violent head-ach, the better to hide my uneasiness. As for him, still master of all his passions, he had strength enough to hear attentively all the ridiculous observations of *Madame de Volancourt*. Without servilely flattering her vanity, he attended to her with so little constraint, that by the time the repast was over, she reckoned him among the number of her friends. Her eyes, into which she strove to throw a languishing softness, assured his Lordship how great a sense she had of his merit. After a few glasses of champaign, she became so good natured, that she appeared to grow young again. She seemed to forget both
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her son and her director, and even that it was time to retire. Lord *W*—— and I suffered too much restraint, not to wish for the hour of separation. When it came, his Lordship took leave with great emotion, and seemed to hasten away only to hide his tears, leaving me to the miseries of horror, solitude and anxiety.

WHEN I had leisure to reflect on the goodness, and generosity of Lord *W*——, I could not help accusing myself, and exclaiming—— “ Shall I thus make the most amiable, the most generous of mankind, wretched ? ” The image of my ingratitude, which I represented to myself in the strongest colours, filled my soul with bitterness and remorse : I took, for an instant, a firm resolution to conquer my affections, and forget my perfidious lover. Pleased with a project which avenged my injured pride, and restored duty and gratitude to my mind ; I took my pen to assure his Lordship, that, overcome by his virtues, I was resolved to be only his. But, scarce had I written a few lines, when my tears effaced them ; my heart interrupted my trembling hand ; the one could not form characters, which the other had not dictated. When I would swear to Lord *W*——, that I would be his, and his alone, my perfidious lover’s name would present itself. His tender looks, tho’ lavished on another, produced all the passion they could have inspired, if fixed upon me. I had seen him inconstant indeed ; but had never seen him so amiable. I viewed his picture, which I covered with a shower of tears ; Pardon me, dear-

est of mankind, cried I, for even harbouring a thought of any but you: this heart, wholly yours, gives you ample satisfaction in my present distress!

How very ingenious is the soul in creating virtues or vices from its own inclinations! I fancied I had committed a crime in ceasing to love Lord B***. I imagined nothing could efface my injustice, but a protestation of eternal love. No, cried I, he can never forget those vows which were dictated by sincerity and innocence. Inconstancy is not the vice of his heart; but only of the country in which he lives. Another interview may possibly recal his tenderness. His soul was once as pure as mine; perfidy is only grafted there by art. I still have hope, and even hope is a treasure in such a situation. This consideration calmed in some measure the violence of my grief. There were some moments in which I ceased to be unhappy, by indulging the pleasing delusion; but, soon, however, the recollection of his so basely disowning me at the play-house, would sink me lower than before. In this manner this most miserable night was passed. The next morning I was under no difficulty of persuading the family that I was sick, for so I was in reality. Madame de Volancourt, whose vanity I so much contributed to raise, appeared alarmed. She took occasion to make me a long pious exhortation, to reconcile me to the perfection of that holy state which was reserved for me. I coldly promised her I would consider of it. But seeing that I was little moved with the warmth

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warmth of her zeal, which she expressed in mystical terms, to which I was perfectly a stranger ; she observed, with a serious air and nodding her head, that her brother had tinctured me with a religion which had caused all his miseries in this world, and which was now his punishment in the other. Strange, Madam, cried I, with indignation and sorrow, what has my unhappy father done to you, thus to condemn him ? I assure you, that had he thought you in an error, he would only have lamented it ; he would have shuddered to condemn you with the same temerity with which you devote him to perdition. Come, said she to the Director, who was entering the room, come and convince this little heretic, who offers to reason when she ought to believe. Without your aid, who can convince the most incredulous, I should despair of her.

AFTER two or three insinuating bows, We ought not, Madam, said he to my aunt, at first to make too hasty advances. Leave the young lady to my care. Heaven will give a blessing to my endeavours ; and soon she will acknowledge herself under more obligation to you, than ever she lay under to the father who begot her. You will leave us, Madam, this is the hour for pious exercises, and you should never break in upon the precious time. *Madame de Volancourt*, who could resist him in nothing, obeyed without reply, and quitted the room.

DON'T be alarmed, Madam, cries the Director, you have nothing to fear from me. My zeal to serve you makes me even incapable of

expressing all I feel. I would first touch your heart, before I would reveal the terrible truths I have to offer to your understanding. Sir, replied I, with spirit, if the religion you are employed to instruct me in, be so sacred and so true as you say it is, there is no need of such art to make it win its way to my breast. He then assumed a reserved and severe air: Yes, Madam, said he, you are right; the religion I am going to persuade you to, has no need of art, but it demands an humble mind, and a tractable spirit; and you seem to me far removed from such happy dispositions. I have no mind to inform your aunt of the little esteem you shew for a man of my character: but know, continued he, with a terrible look, God himself has said in his holy scriptures, that his patience may be wearied out. Know, Madam, that if you still continue to offend that Being, by offending his ministers; his cause must be vindicated! yes, vindicated, even with earthly punishments! And thus saying, he departed.

TAKEN up with a thousand gloomy reflections, revolving in my mind all my past life, I found almost every period of it marked with sorrow. How are your predictions, my dear father, cried I, in tears, most cruelly accomplished, on your unhappy daughter! My soul bred up to virtue, is every where presented with the image of vice. I quitted a peaceable retreat to find an adored lover, and I find him ungrateful and inconstant. An impostor dares to threaten me from behind the mask of religion. Nothing remains that I can call mine, but

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one generous heart, an heart solicitous only of my interests, and that I fill with anguish and disappointment. My pride groans under so shameful a bondage. I am despised, and yet I adore ! Virtue, reason, the boasted excellencies of my father ; to what purpose do I enjoy your illuminations ? They only serve to increase my shame and my despair.

AT this very moment, Madam, life appeared to me so odious, that I wished to end it, as the only way to escape affliction. Henry, who entered the room soon after, only added to my misery, by informing me, that he came from my Lord W——, who appeared downcast and melancholy ; that however his Lordship had taken him out with him to finish my affairs, which he would come and give me an account of that evening. And see here, continued he, this box, these trinkets, those diamonds, which, his Lordship says, you cannot be without. How vain to me, cried I, those splendid trifles ! The victim adorned for sacrifice does not the less feel the blow, for being decked with flowers. Psha ! for the love of goodness, cried my nurse, what have you to be in such a taking about ? you want for no earthly thing. I found I had said too much, and strove to repress my sorrow, at least before them. To extricate me from this embarrassment, I sat down to my toilet, by my aunt's order, who desired my company at dinner.

How disagreeable were the reflections I made during this interval of dressing ! Empty titles, the vanity of being thought fine, such,

said I, are the only pleasures I can have, for the rest of my life, to console me. Dearest solitude ! thou sequestered retreat, where I have tasted unmixed happiness, I shall enjoy thee no more.

THE fatiguing business of the toilet over, my little cousin entered my apartment, in all the transports of satisfaction and rapture. Come, cried she, come and see the prettiest things in the world. What she wanted me to look at, were some trinkets that her lover had presented her with. Yes, cried she, still continuing to regard them, he is the most amiable of mankind ; how happy shall I be with him ! But I have never seen him yet, said I, is he far from hence ? No replied she, he is always at *Paris*, and it is that which delights me. You shall presently see him ; he dines here to-day. The servant came to tell us that dinner was served. What was my astonishment, Madam ! by the raptures of my cousin, I had conceived her lover to be some charming youth ; and instead of that I only beheld an huge phlegmatic figure, by all appearance fifty years old at the least. Seemingly assured of his conquest over Miss ; after the first compliments, he took no farther notice of her while he staid. The uncle made love for him. He appeared to love his niece extremely. He was of a most happy composition ; he still had all the gaiety of youth about him. The good old fashioned man loved his family, hospitality, and his friends ; but, Madam, you know him better than me. You know how very sincere

he

LADY HARRIOT BUTLER. 25

he was ; he could not bear any of those forms or stiffnesses, which he called the shackles of pleasure. I own to you, that his freedom, the facetious and happy simplicity of his ideas, pleased me a thousand times more than any thing I had yet seen. In spite of the melancholy that hung on my mind, I could not avoid laughing heartily at the jests he cracked upon his sister-in-law, without being in the least pain for her ill humour, or the airs of grandeur which she assumed. Beside, I readily perceived that he had a large fund of good sense and good nature. He said a thousand civil things to me, which perhaps wanted that elegance which implies breeding, but which pleased by their sincerity.

AFTER dinner he took me aside ; Well, cried he, and what do you think of my nephew that is to be ? He is indeed a little cool, and not a bit too talkative, but he is very good stuff to make a husband of, as husbands go now-a-days. Besides, he is very rich, and takes the poor girl from hard bondage. She is pleased with him, and we want nothing more. I could wish you one more amiable, my good girl, cried he, patting my hand, for faith I already interest myself in your favour, and pity you with all my heart for being obliged to live with my precious sister. Upon my honour, I don't know a more thoroughbred vixen in all my acquaintance. And coming close to my ear, I hear with pleasure, added he, that you are not entirely depending upon your devout aunt's generosity for fortune. Take the advice of a friend ; be special careful

how you put what you have got into her hands. If my brother took advantage of your father's misfortunes, that is no fault of mine. His ambition led him astray, and heaven has punished him for it; the poor fellow lived but a short time to enjoy what did not properly belong to him. I protest, Madam, I'll do all in my power to repair the wrongs he has done to your family.

I FELT a most sublime pleasure in considering that there was so much virtue still existing. Probity has certain marks which force confidence from even the most cautious. This good man, whom I shall call Mr. *de Villebrun*, so quickly gained mine, that I laid before him the state of my affairs, and told him that Lord *W——* had taken them into his hands. You could not, cried he, have trusted them to one more worthy of confidence. He is the very soul of justice and probity; and tho' one of the first noblemen in his own country, he has none of the faults common to men of his rank. I can only condemn him of being now and then a little melancholy; but even that is better than the insipid vivacity of our modern pretty fellows.

THE certainty of having gained over such a friend as Mr. *Villebrun*, the pleasure of speaking to him with confidence, seem'd in some measure to allay my chagrin. He and his phlegmatic nephew retired when the visiting time began. I can't bear, said he to me, this traffic of folly, falsehood, and spleen. A pretty manner of living together this, laced up in constraint,

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constraint, and tormenting to be tormented. By my faith, I would sooner be pilloried, than thus wear a mask that makes such an horrid figure:

I soon learned, that the frankness and sincerity of Mr. *Villebrun*, had excluded him from the minister's favour, when he was in place. He ow'd his fortune only to his alliance with a wealthy lady; who dying, left him no children. She settled all her fortune upon him, in consideration of his goodness and kind treatment of her. He never took a second wife, but calmly and chearfully passed the remainder of his days amidst the circle of a few friends, by whom he was loved and respected. He knew the use of fortune only as it enabled him to relieve the wretched, and provide for his family.

THE hour approached when Lord *W*— was to arrive. I wish'd, yet fear'd to see him again. When he entered a blush covered my face; I was unable to lift my down cast eyes towards him, which testified my remorse and my shame. He seem'd uneasy. I am going to lose then, said he, that little confidence and friendship with which you promised to honour me. My presence only serves to give you pain. Alas! if I am fear'd, I shall soon be hated. Cards, which were begun, gave us an opportunity of conversation, in which I suffered extremely. Every word his Lordship spoke, I converted into a reproach. He gave me an exact account of the present state of my fortune. How was I astonished when I found that it a—

mounted to more than an hundred thousand crowns ! 'Tho' I was but little acquainted, cried I, with the circumstances of my father, yet I could never have believed that he could save so much from the wreck of his fortune, and I fear your Lordship only wants to swell the amount of my former obligations, by new instances of generosity. No, Madam, cried he, I should esteem it too great a favour to have my presents accepted, and this is only what is justly your own. He then gave me so circumstantial and so satisfactory an account of every particular, that I could no longer resist. I informed him of the interview I that morning had with my aunt's director. He seem'd alarm'd at it. You have reason to apprehend, cried he, the gloomy craft of such men as he. The arms of hypocrisy are always dangerous. Your aunt, who ought to protect you, will be the readiest to second the attempt. His Lordship was charm'd with the acquaintance I had made with Mr. *de Villebrun*, and the protection he had offered me. Turn it to your advantage, said he, trust your concerns in his hands; he is a man of honour, and will not deceive you ; his assistance may one day be of greater service than mine, since I am but a stranger here. In my own country, added he with a sigh, I could have offered you a rank worthy of you ; but the honour of being instrumental in making you happy, is not reserved for me, unfortunate as I am. In speaking this, he look'd earnestly in my face, as if to read in my eyes what he only feared to be told. He
there

there saw only melancholy and tears, the un-availing efforts of an heart that struggled to be free, but could not break its chain. Ah, my Lord, said I, with a suppressed sigh, how odious how guilty do your kindnesses render me to myself ! This, interrupted he, is what I feared. Am I then only made to fill that heart with grief and remorse, which I could wish to inspire with delight ! Your grief only makes me more unhappy. We are not masters of our own sensations ; I know it well ; and accuse you not. Forget, only, that I loved you ; behold in me, for the future, a friend, who shall study to make your happiness his only employment. Thus saying, he left me, and sat down to cards with two ladies who had just come in. As for me, I retired to my chamber, to hide my agitation and my tears.

AFTER abandoning myself for some time to my uneasiness, I however made some reflections on my present situation. The advice of my father, the instructions of his Lordship, all that I had seen since I enter'd *France*, had taught me the proper decorum which a lady should observe, who had any regard for reputation. I am no longer in solitude, said I, where no eye observes the indulgence of an innocent tenderness. If in such a situation my lover had been inconstant, I would not have blush'd to reclaim him, with an open confession of all my feelings ; here it is necessary now to avoid him, and to appear to forget him entirely. Customs, which I detest, confine my sensibility

lity from being exerted. Thus, while I lamented that I was not allowed even the comfort of tears, I took a firm resolution, however, of concealing all my agitations under the appearance of tranquillity. I returned to the company, and for the rest of the evening had sufficient command of myself to hear their conversation, and sometimes join in the discourse.

HIS Lordship seem'd pleased with my conduct. He still continued his complaisance to my aunt; by flattering whose vanity he hoped to bribe her into some kindness for me. Madame *de Clairville*, who supped with us, look'd as if she was dying with envy at his Lordship's indifference to her; for, in spite of all her coquetting, he appeared insensible.

ALL that I had yet seen at my aunt's, gave me such a violent disgust at the world, that I only sought for solitude. But even this pleasure was denied me. My aunt, whose vanity was pleased with shewing me, made me undergo a perpetual round of visits, in which I was obliged to exhaust all the variety of dress to appear before women, whose forced and insipid flattery gave me the spleen. I found that the whole art of politeness consisted in bestowing our applause on those occasions where we received least pleasure. To increase the calamity my aunt supposed, that the true way to make me a devotee, like her, was to bring me to all the exercises of piety. I had not yet been instructed in their mysteries.

I HAD now led this fatiguing life eight days. My Lord *W*——, still melancholy and uneasy,

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easy, had taken a resolution of talking to me only on indifferent matters, or such only as had a reference to my fortune. By his advice, I transferred it into the hands of Mr. *Villebrun*: The most sincere protestations, the most ardent zeal, gave me assurances, on his part, of the most unreserved and disinterested friendship.

BUT you want, perhaps, to hear more of my cousin *Volancourt*, that man of fashion and gaiety. He took it into his head, after hearing the praises lavish'd on me by all the rest of the polite world, to rank me in the list of his conquests. He honoured me with his attention for three days, and perceiving that his high and volatile air did not succeed, his pride stooped so far as to assume one of affection and tenderness, which, it was supposed, I could not resist. Even his mother seemed piqued at my insensibility; but I soon removed her apprehensions. Her dear son was certain of a quick and easy triumph, as such coxcombs generally are. I had already stopped his fine career. Tho' an ignorant rustic, yet I was able to bring him to humility, and continue his passion for almost eight days. At the end of this term however, after he had taken revenge by some insipid epigrams, I was entirely delivered from his ridiculous addresses.

IN the mean time I heard no news of Lord B***. I suppressed my sorrow and tears; but constraint only contributed to afflict me more deeply. I suffered the oppression of visits and conversation, merely from the feeble hope of hearing about him; or meeting with him: but

but all in vain.—I went to bed every night pensive, restless, forlorn; my sleep was short and interrupted; even my dreams served to redouble the horror of my affliction. My health was impairing every day.

THE marriage of my cousin was just going to be celebrated. Madame de Volahcourt took me with her one morning to the court end of the town to transact some business. Not much solicitous in trifles of this nature, I went forward almost without thought; when I was at once arouz'd by a voice too well known to be mistaken. Turning about, I perceived Lord B***. I was so much astonish'd at this unexpected interview, that I remained motionless. Lord B*** did not appear less surpris'd. Tho' almost beside myself, yet I was attentive to all his actions. He cast down his eyes, and I fancied he was going to avoid me a second time. What restraint did I put on, not to call him? Without doubt he saw the desire I had to speak to him; he seem'd touch'd with my situation and, tho' but slowly, he made up to me. He appeared in the same confusion with me, now blushing, then growing pale. At length, however, he pronounced a few syllables I could not understand. My disorder and blushes might alone have answer'd him. After several essays, after having several times attempted to speak, he at last asked me, by what happy means we met in that place? Ah, my lord, replied I, fixing my eyes, humid with tears, tenderly on him, can you ask me the cause? Overcome by a voice which had once been so pleasing to him,
he

he answered me only with looks filled with love and remorse. He seized one of my hands, which he closely pressed in his. How charming was this silent interview!

Is it possible, said he, that you do not hate me! No, my Lord, no I do not hate you. Tho' inconstant, I never ceased to love you. Seeing that this reproach gave him embarrassment and affliction, and fearing to increase his distress, I only testified my satisfaction at meeting with him, and briefly informed him of all that happened since his departure. Madame *de Volancourt* whose business was too soon transacted, banish'd these moments of pleasure. Lord B*** promised to pay me a visit the next day. A party he detested had engaged him for the mean time.

INTOXICATED with this unexpected good fortune and happiness, I no longer remembered my sorrows. Yet for all this joy, the day seem'd insupportably tedious. However, I was so much employed with ruminating on my success, that it threw a vivacity into my eyes, which Mr. *Villebrun* remark'd at our return, and complimented me on my looks. He had found an excellent match for me, and was come to propose it. Heavens, Madam, with what spirit did I reject an offer, which he thought I ought to have accepted with eagerness! The good man did not insist upon his proposal, and regarding me stedfastly, I would not, said he, dive into secrets which you desire to conceal; but, my Child, all I can tell you is, that you cannot make a more worthy choice. Tho' I don't

don't boast much sagacity, I perceive the cause of your refusal, and I gratulate you upon it with all my heart. I plainly saw that the old gentleman was deceived, but I thought it best to let him remain in his error. We easily bear the discovery of a fictitious love, but are touch'd when our real passion comes to be revealed.

My cousin's contract, which was settled the same day, made me really uneasy for her; yet by her own good humour, which appeared in every motion, she seemed extremely satisfied. How, cried I to myself, is it possible to be happy without loving? my soul, only turned to love, valued the gifts of fortune, of rank, and gaiety, as nothing.

NOTHING but a rival could make me unhappy; and I own, the Princess of C—— gave me real disquietude. Notwithstanding all my precaution to avoid it, jealousy had taken possession of my heart. If the looks, the repentance, and the sorrow of my lover, serv'd to encourage me, yet it was mortifying to think that even then, he might be acting the very same scene with my rival. But what rival! The most amiable of women, one whom he adored even before me! Disengaged from the importunities of the day, and delivered up to my own reflections, I fancied I could entertain those only which might flatter my passion. But this season of repose brought up a thousand phantoms suggested by fear, or made probable by reason. I saw his Lordship's inconstancy! The Princess was absent when he apologiz'd for his behaviour. His tenderness was but a feeble gleam.

gleam of long forgotten love, and perhaps offered from pity, not affection. His regards perhaps were not strong enough to break his engagements at that time with the Princess; whom I dreaded. Sleep, that is ever most needful to the afflicted, comes to them with the most tardy pace; I could not get one moment's repose: I rose with the day. Charmed with the pleasing delusion, I fancied every moment would present the dear object of my solicitude. But dinner was served, and my inquietudes continued. My Lord *W*—— was there. I asked him earnestly why I had not seen him the evening before! hoping that he perhaps would talk of Lord *B****, for we naturally listen to every thing that seems to flatter our wishes. He informed me that he had been admitted of a party with the Princess of *C*——. At this fatal name the questions I was going to ask stopped at my very lips: I attempted no more. But his Lordship, who read in my eyes my fears and my desires, continued with a pensive air, Without doubt, Madam, I should ill gratify your curiosity if I did not tell you all I knew. Lord *B**** was there also.—I cast down my eyes, sighed, and, unable too repress my curiosity, I continued to demand the remainder with a look of impatience. Alas, Madam, pursued he, I understand you but too well! Why do you chuse to stab your heart with new afflictions! my silence might satisfy you. Had I good news to relate, it should have been told at once. The perfidious wretch! cried I, to add fraud also to his other vices!

vices! Perhaps he is more to be pitied than blamed, said Lord *W*———!! The connexions I have ever had with his father, my being his countryman, the few words you yesterday spoke to him in my favour, his heart touched with a passion which you so powerfully revived by the expression of yours, all conspired to make him fly to me, in order to discover his secrets. He seem'd to me transported to find you again so faithful and so tender. He swore to me, that he would instantly break off all connexions with the Princess, which only filled him with shame and remorse. The Princess appeared, and tho' she call'd him, yet he had the courage not to obey. He seem'd no way touch'd even at her sorrow: but at last, overcome by her charms, by her languishing looks, the music of her voice, yielding an implicit conquest, he disappeared with your rival. In about two hours, his blushes, at meeting me, shew'd that he was once more entangled in his former chain. For some time my presence seem'd to give him uneasiness, but soon I saw him deliver himself up entirely to his passion, and instead of endeavouring to hide, glory in his choice; and in his situation of things I took my leave. This, Madam, is what I had to say: I have been too exact, perhaps, but it was your own demand. No, my Lord, no, replied I, this was only wanting to cure me. I only regret, at present, that I was weak enough to expect him. I now see in Lord *B**** a creature I detest, and whom I shall soon despise. Alas, cried his Lordship, you deceive yourself: I should

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I should have spared your heart a disagreeable truth, but that I feared the feeding your hopes with deception, would have rendered me still more odious. It is often upon those who deceive us in our most pleasing delusions, that all the weight of our hatred and resentment is fixed. Ah, my Lord, cried I, how does so unjust a suspicion sink me in your esteem! Help me to recover my reason; it will be more dear to me if I am indebted for it to you. Thus, Madam, I mistook an excess of passion for the beginning of hatred. Nevertheless, the most trifling noise put me all into confusion; every visitor I saw entering I took for the dear deceiver; and yet I now only desired to see him, in order to treat his sincerity with mortifying contempt. I thought of him continually, but mixed all his faults with the idea; and tho' at present I did not love Lord *W*——, yet I hoped that soon his virtues would prevail over my prepossessions.

THREE days passed in this manner, in which, supported by pride, I thought my conquest complete. In order to dissipate my sensibility I endeavoured to amuse myself with the ordinary occurrences of the family. The marriage of my cousin was celebrated; and tho' Madame *de Volancourt* took all possible pains to throw in her pride and ill humour into the gaiety of the feast, yet the facetious old *Villebrun* triumphed in spite of her. He made her consent to a ball. The novelty of a sight I had never seen before, the harmony of the instruments the joy diffused over the whole assembly, the praises which
were.

were bestow'd upon me ; all conspired to banish my grief. I felt more sensibly the pleasure of being esteemed the most beautiful, because it was a sort of vengeance on Lord B*** for neglecting me. But, madam, how little do the pleasures of vanity fill a breast that is open only to delicate sensibility !

SCARCE was the wedding over, but Madam *de Volancourt* and her daughter separated with mutual satisfaction; both pleased at never seeing each other more, except when the most absolute decorums required. And yet perhaps, my aunt could still have wished for somebody to vent her spleen and ill nature upon. As for her daughter, about to enjoy a liberty she had never known, she delivered herself up to all the whims, caprices, and imaginations of a young creature, who follows her inclinations without reserve. Her gaiety, her vivacity quickly transformed her into a charming woman, and gave her a new lustre, of which, however, her husband seemed perfectly insensible. I remained therefore alone, with Madam *Volancourt* ; and now recovering myself a little, I perceived how much I was a prey to my griefs ; and the efforts I made to hide, only served to increase them. When the heart is not permitted to pursue the bent of its inclinations, it suffers doubly by constraint. I could not long resist such violent agitations. My health was visibly impaired. I was like a flower that has lost its vivid beauties when the root is decayed.

LORD

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LORD *W*——, the witness of my painful efforts, apprehensive for my life, and sacrificing even his hopes to save me, used as many means to bring back Lord *B****, as others would to keep off a rival. He described to him my love, my sorrow, in such strong colouring, that the tenderness of my lover, excited by pity, made him once more sacrifice his new flame to my constancy. Lord *W*—— brought me a letter from Lord *B****, in which, without justifying his inconstancy, he swore an eternal fidelity as an expiation of his crime. Passion was never expressed with more fervency.

EVEN more ; his Lordship, carrying his generosity to the utmost length, had the address, by removing my aunt, to procure me an interview with my lover. As soon as he saw me, penetrated with my dejection and sorrow, he threw himself at my feet. His expressions of penitence prevented my reproaches, and our tears were a long time our only interpreters. I soon believed him as tender as myself ; he even saw my repentance for having harboured a design of ceasing to love him. In short, Madam, for eight days I was constantly visited by him, and each day he swore to love me and me alone.

MADAME *de Volancourt* was so filled with notions of grandeur, that it was not difficult for Lord *B****, introduced by Lord *W*——, to gain a free access. Desirous, as she expressed it, of making use of the fine weather, she engaged them to spend some time at a pleasure-

sure-house she had near *Paris*. She was charmed with displaying her magnificence before *English* noblemen. * However Lord *W*——, after the engagement was made, declined the party, under pretence of indispensable business, but in reality from being tortured with a view of that love, which he was so instrumental in reconciling. I own, Madam, I was not displeased with his refusal. I persuaded myself, that his absence and resolution might conspire to cure him of a passion, which I could never indulge; and that from a lover I should find him a friend.

LORD *B**** knew so well how to engage the esteem of my aunt, by his respectful air, and his unceasing assiduities, that she even gave way to some desires which the penetrating *Madame de Clairville* but too openly cautioned her against. She had quitted the world, and become a devotee, with that regret which induced her to seize every opportunity of returning into it; and she now found a proper opportunity. She made me the pretext of her embarking again in gaiety; to shew me to the world was all she pretended; to enjoy it herself her real design. Thus, Madam, instead of interrupting the progress of our amour, she favoured it as far as it lay in her power.

INTOXICATED with the pleasure of beholding continually what I loved, my fears and alarms were put to flight. Lord *B**** received a letter from the Princess, which he put into my hands without opening. What a letter, Madam! Was it possible for a woman to
forget

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herself so far ! All the distraction of passion was strongly expressed ; yet still wounded vanity seemed more apparent than injured love. Lord B**** tore it in my presence, without attempting to read it.

HE then informed me, that upon his arrival in *France*, the Dutches of —, so famous for gallantry and intrigue, charged herself with the care of initiating him in the *grand monde*. But still, added he, with an heart sensible only of my first flame, I reflected only on what I had lost in you. I was shocked with the levities of a glittering court, whose manners I despised. The bold effrontery of the women, which went by the name of grace and good breeding, still fixed me more devotedly to her whose modesty claimed all my respect. I sought only for solitude. Nothing could alleviate my grief but the study of history, or the art of war. 'Tho' my father approved of my assiduity, yet he condemned my passion for solitude, and himself introduced me to people of the first distinction. The Dutches pursued me with so much ardour, that it was impossible to resist. What shall I say, Madam ? I was young—she was beautiful ; she impressed on my soul an emotion I took for love, which I yet reproached myself for, as guilty of treason to your superior charms. But even she herself soon taught me to know that you had lost none of your rights in my heart. I found your image still more lively and more charming. The Marquis *de L—*, a man possessed of more wit than any at court, who knows
women

women the best, and who despises them the most, and who yet had the vanity to talk of having had them in turn, undertook to give me what he called principles. I was at once disgusted with the lecture. I could not accustom myself to regard perfidy and inconstancy only as trifles; but the laugh which was raised against me, the ridicule which he used, the same he had acquired by an opposite conduct, all conspired to seduce me, and put me upon the same frivolous manner of behaving. Besides, my charmer, continued he, in this system it was not at all necessary to be in love. So in assuming the livery of falshood and inconstancy, I fancied it would be the surest means of securing my affections to you. I hoped, for you had assured me of it, soon to have the pleasure of seeing you again; and I was only willing to charm away the tediousness of your absence. I gave myself up therefore to the direction of the Marquis, and in less than two months he made me change at least six mistresses.

ALAS, my Lord, cried I, how different is my love from yours! it dreads even the shadow of inconstancy. When I owed every thing to gratitude, my heart seemed to reproach me as if I had parted with what should have been wholly yours.

My dear Madam, replied his Lordship, you are revenged. After the first moments of my madness, every thing told me that I had mistaken the road to happiness. In every hour of reflection your image rose to my view, and I lamented

lamented your absence. The anxiety which I endeavoured to avoid, gained ground every day, and wasted me continually. The Marquis perceived it. What is the matter? cried he; I find you dull and melancholy! Are you already infected with your native spleen? And then, with an ironical look, Well, my poor boy, tell me, have you not some concealed mistress at your heart? for such is the usual folly of your age. Come, assume an air of cheerfulness. A fine woman has yesterday appeared at court; make the first approaches; I have come to apprize you. I am so much your friend, as to let you have the first of her: I'll be contented to take her when you have done: I have some business that calls me to her now. Thus, instantly taking me with him, he introduced me to the lady.

BUT the Princess, cried I, interrupting his Lordship, impatient at an account which gave no information of what I desired to know. Very well; the Princess, replied he, blushing, was only an object of my vanity. What, answered I, and have you found even the deceitful art of feigning a passion? Believe me, returned he, I have so far forgot this Princess you seem so much to fear, that I am not ashamed to own my weakness. My sincerity, at least, will repair my fault, in seeming to love any but you. The number of admirers, with which she was surrounded, her beauty, her admirable art of touching the passions, her quality, all made me think her a prize that would load me with honours, if I succeeded.

I imparted my projects to the Marquis, who advised, for the sake of that glory I panted after, not to hazard it upon an object that would certainly be its downfall. His advice only stimulated my ambition. I therefore made the attempt; I was well received; none could be treated more politely; but I wanted to be distinguished. Soon I fancied that I was so; the Marquis himself thought so too; I had more tender glances from her than usual, and she even discovered marks of emotion; but after some time I found myself deceived; and that I was only placed upon the same level with my rivals. Upon this I used a stratagem, which, tho' usually practised, however succeeded with me. I pretended an attachment to a lady, who, for beauty, was at that time the only rival of the Princess; for, you Madam, were not then in *Paris*.

THE Princess, continued he, enraged that I deserted her levee to increase that of her rival, used all her efforts to recal me. And I, to ensure my victory, affected to make a long resistance. In fine, I capitulated so well, I so rated the terms of the conquest, I so availed myself of obstinacy and pride, that I obtained all, even to the sacrificing my rivals. My triumph now appeared so compleat, that my heart, warmed by my imagination, took for love what were only the effects of my vanity. But, my dear Madam, how far were the sentiments I felt for her, from those I now feel for you! My soul never, except in your company, found its perfect indulgence of every wish. And yet,
my

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my Lord, cried I, shedding tears I could not restrain, you vow'd, when you first left me, an eternal constancy. Alas ! my heart found you sufficiently charming before ; why would you thus attempt to convince me of your power ?

FROM this time, Madam, Lord B***, on every occasion, vow'd an eternal passion ; which moved me without persuading me. I at first pardoned his infidelity, when I conceived it owing to his weakness, and even his sensibility ; her charms and beauty were the triumph of mine, since I had obtained the victory : but when he had informed me, that he had sacrificed me only to her vanity, I considered that this might operate on every future occasion. The Marquis, or the Princess, with a single Word, a single smile, would be able to seduce my lover. Alas ! cried I, what have I to do in a country where inconstancy, treachery, and perfidy, add charms and lustre to reputation ; where innocence is deemed rustic, and simplicity ridiculous !

AT the end of eight days the unhappy Lord W——, unable to refrain from paying me a visit, came to see me. I was affected with pity and sorrow to see him so much cast down. I chid him for his absence ; I expressed my inquietude for the state in which I saw him ; I mixed my discourse with all the warmth of gratitude and friendship. He was softened with my concern, and regarding me with a sorrowful air, Spare, Madam, cried he, to offer illusions to my view, which in-

duce me to wish for happiness that must never be mine. How much more happy is Lord B*** ! but let impartiality determine, is he more worthy ? But, pardon me, Madam, if I am jealous of a bliss, of which you partake ; you shall, at least, never see me trouble your repose. I protested, and I believe, Madam, protested with sincerity, that I should never enjoy, without regret, an happiness which might cost him any part of his tranquillity. From this moment I took a resolution of sparing him the disagreeable sight of my tenderness for his rival. But Lord B*** was soon jealous of that reserve, which I thought due to the most generous of mankind. When I would attempt to reason him from his suspicions, naturally proud and cholerick, he flew into a passion. The expression of my love gave him no pleasure, unless it afflicted his rival. My Lord, said I to him, since you reign in my breast, must you banish from it every sentiment of gratitude ? To Lord W—— I am indebted for your return to me ; and but for him I should have lost you for ever.

I SAW too, with regret, that his jealousy was only impelled by his pride, which could not brook even a rivalry in virtue. A delicate passion would have been pleased with such an opposition ; but he was under no fear of losing my heart ; he knew all its tenderness. However, notwithstanding the severity of his reproaches, I continued to have that respect for Lord W——, which I owed him from such a variety of motives.

SINCE

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SINCE I became more intimately acquainted with the character of Lord B****, love was no longer a passion that harboured with tranquillity in my bosom. All was combat and warfare there. My whole reason condemned him. All my wishes were for his rival : And yet the more I saw of the defects of my lover, the more I seemed to increase in tenderness and affection. His very faults were pleasing. His pride, when I saw him humbled at my feet, made his submissions more poignant. The many fine women, whom he had seduced, still added force to his charms. The fear of losing what we love, doubly enhances its value.

NEVERTHELESS, a day scarcely passed in which we had not scenes of altercation. As I let him see my tenderness without reserve, he soon imagined that there was nothing I ought to refuse him. He sometimes joined pride to the ardour of his caresses ; and perhaps that pride was a better defence of my honour, than my own virtue. I soon perceived his conduct would at last sink me even in his esteem ; and my pride, in its turn, took the alarm. I plainly saw that a woman, who ceases to respect herself, will soon grow contemptible in the eyes of her lover.

YET still, I never mentioned to his Lordship that union which puts all emotions of this kind beyond the reach of censure, and after which I might give a loose to every affection. The idea they had given me in *France* of an husband, quite affrighted me. I was apprehen-

five of losing my lover, by making him too securely mine. Beside, this was no time to think of marriage. His country, a prey to troubles and dissensions at that time, employed all his father's thoughts. My lover never learn'd from me the sacrifice I had made to him, of the offer'd alliance with Lord *W—*: but still he was some-how informed of it; and, instead of being sensible of the delicacy of my sentiments, I always saw him in a fury when he fancied, I would one day accept of those offers which flattered my ambition. Frequently I was in dread, lest there should be some fatal misunderstanding between Lord *W—* and him. But I recovered my spirits when I saw, that, in spite of his menaces, he always behaved with that deference, which is exacted by superior dignity, merit, and virtue.

MADAME *de Clairville*, of whom I have not made mention for some time, tried all her arts, but in vain, to engage Lord *W—* among the number of her admirers. Her coquettish airs, her childish lisps, her painting, and ogling, had no effect upon his heart; and she was obliged to desist from the siege. She was resolved, however, to be revenged of the pride of Madame *de Volancourt*, who had assumed an air of superiority since her connection with *English* noblemen. As for me, whom she perceived as one obstacle in her way to conquest, she deferred her revenge to a more favourable opportunity. She hated me as yet only as a rival; but soon she hated me as a witness

witness of her shame. One day, as my reveries had conducted me into a shady wood, I found her with the Abbe, her director——Be it sufficient to say, she had not expected me there, I did not amuse myself by enjoying her embarrassment, for I believe mine was as great as her's. Tho' I had got at least two hundred paces from the place, I still kept running. That night, whatever levities she pretended to assume, she could not behold me without blushing: nevertheless, next morning she departed in order to take vengeance of a person, who was so unfortunate as to have been a witness, to what they attempted to conceal.

MADAME *de Volancourt* appeared quite easy at their departure. The same day they went, their absence was supply'd by the arrival of others whom we had not expected. Mr. *de Volancourt*, merely from whim, and by way of surprize, brought with him two ladies, one an admirer of his, another attached to a friend of his; and two men of wit, or who passed for such. Upon entering, the women thought proper to be out of order through fatigue, so that they could hardly sit up: they had indeed travelled a whole league, and that was enough to shake such delicate frames to pieces. The wits, even while saluting the company, threw out epigrams; while Mr. *de Volancourt* and his friend, a gentleman every way worthy of such confidence, walked together arm in arm, whispering and interrupting their dialogue with a loud laugh.

THE first day was passed by the ladies in the vapours, by the wits in saying good things, and in forced laughter by the two petit maitres. But the next day, the two ladies who had observed Lord B***, put themselves under arms to dispute the conquest. Our petit maitres seemed confounded with the natural superiority he seem'd to possess over them; while the wits, who thought to pass with stale jests and puns for men of parts, seem'd disconcerted and annihilated by the knowledge and eloquence of Lord W——, who undertook to shew them how little forced humour can prevail against natural good sense, and an improved understanding. They were revenged, by treating his knowledge as merely *English*, a fire which produces more smoke than flame. His Lordship gave them leave to take the lead, contented with only despising them. They then were at leisure to stun us, without controul, with sonnets and extempore epigrams, with cobweb metaphysics, and stale jests, to which were given a new air. Though Lord B*** had no taste for these two ladies; his vanity, however, seem'd pleased with their endeavours, particularly as the two *fine gentlemen* were thus humbled by his superiority. I could not avoid admiring, how women, whose vanity was all they had to push them forward, could suffer the impertinent freedoms and tones of contempt with which his Lordship treated them. Such follies, thought I, are most pleasing from an universal contagion; sense tortured into double meaning, our appe-

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tites driven faster than our desires; this, this is the pleasure of the gay world here. Goodness, wisdom, reason, virtue, you dare not appear, you are too obscure to be seen in such brilliant company.

I FOUND a refuge in Lord *W*——— from all this wit, and taste, and good humour. Lord *B* * * *, who entered into the extravagance, was not displeased with my attention to his rival. I could not hinder myself from letting him know it. My Lord, cried I to him, one day, I fear that a rival will rob me of your heart. I may enjoy your affections, and yet be sacrificed to your vanity. He was willing in turn to let me into some of those principles which render a woman so charming. Permit me, cried I, to preserve those virtues which you call savage. If I can only please you by parting with them, I had rather lament all my life the loss of your heart; but if I do not see you possessed of the remains, at least of those qualities you seem to despise, be assured I shall never love you for your vices.—In fact, when my lover was with me for some time, I found him returned to virtue; his great and noble soul at length recovered all its force and dignity.

MR. *de Volancourt*, who found himself obliged to act an under-part, fatigued, mortified with the uniformity of the country, departed with his friend, his wits, and his women, after being with us four days. I own, their departure restored me to my former tranquillity. We remained there eight days longer, during which

Lord B*** vow'd, by the most tender passion to abjure his errors for ever. However, at parting, I did not perceive him so concerned as I, to quit a retreat where we were both so happy.

AT my return to *Paris*, I found a storm gathered, of which I soon perceived the violence. My aunt, weak and vain, was held only to me by the ties of vanity, which might easily be broken. Her director having represented, that it was not consistent with her zeal or duty to keep under the same roof with her, a woman without belief, an heretic, hardened in all the errors of her education. He represented to her how far the respect the world had for her, and how much her rank in life were degraded, by permitting such a correspondence to subsist in her house as that carried on between Lord B*** and her niece. Then arming himself with all the weapons of calumny, he painted us both in colours so odious, that *Madame de Volancourt*, shuddered at her crimes. To be certain of his blow, he enforced his persuasions by the motive of interest. Your niece is rich, as you have told me; is it not then surprising, that, as she has been committed to your care, you have not also been put in possession of her fortune? Ask it from her, even mix caresses with your demands. When you thus have her wholly in your power, reproach her faulty conduct, her obstinacy, alarm her by menaces, and this will probably make her resolve to hide her fears in a convent; but if not force her into one. Who can protect a stranger, without support, against your intentions.

Beside,

Beside, in such a case, a small pension will serve her, the rest you may enjoy, who are much fitter to possess it than an infidel.

I WAS astonished, one morning some time after, when my aunt order'd me to be called to her apartment; she loaded me with caresses, employ'd the most affecting tones of friendship, and with the most seducing smile assured me of her regard. Her affection for her son alone equalled that she expressed for me. She next, as if from motives of the purest friendship, demanded a circumstantial account of my fortune. I answered her in an artless manner, that I was worth an hundred thousand crowns in bank bills. But, my dear child, continued she, more soothingly even than before, are they in your own hands? You are unfit to take care of such a sum, you are yet but young. I don't chuse to make use of the power put into my hands by your father, I only ask to have some mark of confidence reposed in me.

THE fear of giving you trouble, Madam, replied I, is the only reason you have not had the guardianship of my fortune with my person. Mr. *Villebrun*, your brother-in-law, has been kind enough to take that trust upon him, which would only be an embarrasment to you. Mr. *de Villebrun*, replied she, with an air of astonishment! Madam, Mr. *Villebrun* has assured me, that he would regard my interests as his own. And as I owe this generosity to you, I have the same gratitude for it, as if I received it from yourself.

THUS

THUS seeing her views disconcerted, by a consciousness of her brother-in-law's integrity, she became furious as a lioness robbed of her whelps. Her sparkling eyes, her trembling lips, reproaches and invectives following each other so fast as to choak up the passage: her hands almost in act to strike,—all filled me with such terror that I ran to save myself in my chamber, and shut the door. By good fortune I perceived *Henry* from my window. I made him a sign to come near, and desired him to wait till I had written to Mr. *Villebrun*; whom I begged to come in haste and save me from the fury of his sister-in-law. *Henry*, before he went, desired my footman to keep guard at the chamber door. *Madam de Volancourt* finding that I was positive in refusing her admittance, gave such way to the impulse of rage, that she did not even endeavour to hide it from her servants, but ordered them to break my door open which none of them chose to obey. At the sight of Mr. *Villebrun* her distraction seemed to encrease. She loaded him with a thousand invectives; but he, without giving any attention to her noise, begged of me to open the door, which I did upon hearing his voice. Each of us finding that it was vain to oppose the torrent of my aunt's rage, permitted her to continue it without interruption. However, when it was pretty well exhausted, as I was touched to the quick at her invectives, relative to the connections between me and Lord B***, I never thought, *Madam*, cried I, that an aunt, who had made me so many professions of regard,

gard, would have been the first to blast my reputation. But how came it that my connections with Lord B*** escaped you before? I knew it from the first, replied she; but blinded by good nature, could not be persuaded till

—— Hold, Madam, cried I, I know the fountain from whence this calumny flows, and know it to be polluted at the very source; but the vices of such people are so odious to me, that I should think my lips contaminated with but barely mentioning them. This is the only reason I have for concealing the iniquities of such an impostor. At these words, Madam *de Volancourt*, with her eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, began to reproach me, calling me a sacrilegious wretch, and a profaner of holy things; but Mr. *Villebrun* assuming a stern and stedfast air, interrupted the torrent of her ill nature. You ought to blush, Madam, said he, at the imputations with which you have endeavoured to brand your niece. I readily see into the mean and unworthy motive. After having deprived your unfortunate brother of his fortune, your insatiable avarice would also swallow up that of his daughter. But, Madam, her fortune is in my hands, and I will preserve it, tho' it were at the expence of my own: dispute it if you dare.

AFTER what has happened, continued the generous old man, your niece cannot live with you any longer with reputation: If you think proper, Miss, said he to me, I'll go and conduct you to one of our religious houses, where you will find a sure asylum for injured innocence

cence and virtue. Madam *de Volancourt*, who did not expect such a resolution, after having meanly had recourse to tears to expiate her violence, was willing to avail herself of the power which she had received over me from my father's letter. But Mr. *Villebrun*, without taking the least notice of her remonstrances, as soon as all was ready for my departure, took me with him in his coach, and we both set off, loaded with the maledictions of my dear and loving aunt.

As soon as we were arrived at Mr. *Villebrun's*, come, said he, let us sit down to table, and forget the scene that has been just transacted: for he saw that I was still greatly moved. Come, my dear child, said he, banish all those gloomy ideas you seem to indulge. What! can the anger of a woman, or the calumny of an hypocrite, afflict you! What mighty evil have they made you suffer! By their means you recover your liberty; and you will be no longer subject to the whims and extravagancies of your aunt: thus good arises from evil. I cannot bear those dark melancholy souls that are always musing. Some folks are always telling us that mankind are vicious. Well and so much the worse for themselves! Instead of being afflicted upon that account, let us labour to render ourselves independant of the wicked world. Let us be content, let us be virtuous, and we shall not have much cause to complain. Believe me, Miss, continued the good man, pouring me out a glass of champagne, it is in pleasure, taken in moderation, that we find relief from sorrow;
too

too much reflection plunges us into deeper distress, and impairs our spirits. True reason is the art of being happy. For this purpose dissipation is necessary; none but a fool stays at home when he finds himself in a fit of the spleen.

THE morality of Mr. *Villebrun* was so sensible, and delivered with so facetious an air, that it almost entirely dissipated my uneasiness. The good man, inspired by a chearful glass, was extremely gallant. What a pity it is, said he, you cannot live with me. You would here be free; you would see only good company; and I, old as I am, should be in raptures with your conversation. Youth and beauty are the most charming objects in nature. My eyes behold them, even still, with pleasure, and yet I am no way sorry that I can only admire them. No more subject to the dominion of the passions, I find myself more happy. But, my dear child, continued he, decency is a yoke to which we must submit, and it is time to think of fixing your retreat. As you have a mind better cultivated than is generally seen at your age, I have made choice of one of those religious houses, which you can leave at pleasure. I shall write to the Abbess to get ready for you an handsome apartment which became vacant yesterday. You may be attended by your own Servants, and you will be under no restraint, except a little more regularity than when you lived abroad. To-morrow, if you think proper, I will present you to a female friend, where you will be under no danger of
envy

envy or suspicion. The merit of the mistress of the house, impresses all that know her with the most unfeigned reverence of her virtues.

THEN instructing me in the manners and customs of the nuns, he cautioned me above all things not to shock their weakness, by arguing against their prejudices.—As we still had a great deal of time before it was necessary to go, affecting a tone of raillery, he spoke of Lord B*** I am not curious said he, nor do I want to embarrass you, but yet I own I'm not a stranger to your sentiments. I don't reproach you for them; I know that we are not often masters of our own hearts, and I am sorry that it is so. Lord W—— loves you, and he has told me enough to let me know that his whole fortune would be considered as a trifle, compared to the pleasure of possessing you. My dear child, continued this affectionate man, squeezing my hand, love often blinds us to our real interests. Lord B*** is very young, and I perceive that if he has the charms of youth, he has also its defects. Besides, he depends upon the will of a father; and there is but little pleasure in becoming the distressful heroine of romance.

I too strongly felt the truth of Mr. Villebrun's observation, but it had no other effect upon my heart than to make me tremble. Thinking to justify myself, I related the origin and progress of my passion. My recital discovered how strongly I felt it: he lamented my error, and recommended to my meditations the lessons of my father.

AFTER.

AFTER the receiving an answer from the Abbess, we set out to my new abode. Tho' I did not regret leaving my aunt's, this change however astonished me. Arrived at the door, the abbess, and some of the heads of the convent, came out to receive me. The mystical airs, the drawling voices, the fulsome compliments, induced me to think that I should meet hypocrisy under the veil, as I had already under the cowl; but soon I perceived that the nuns were too harmless to deceive. A little vanity which expected admiration and respect, was almost all the vice that was left them. Mr. *Villebrun* settled all things proper with them, and to procure me more than usual liberty, paid double their demands.

AFTER a long conversation, in which my old friend shewed his usual gaiety, I was conducted to my retreat. While they were opening, with huge keys, the doors of this prison, inaccessible to the profane, I requested Mr. *Villebrun* to inform Lord *W*—— of my new situation. And as for Lord *B****, returned he smiling, you will not be displeased at seeing him also, and with my bringing him to-morrow. Sir, returned I, your discretion shall be the guide of my conduct; upon which he took his leave.

REST and solitude were now what I could have desired, but it was necessary first to undergo a formal introduction to the whole community. I was instantly therefore surrounded with a whole army of the sisterhood, whose inquisitive eyes surveyed me from head to foot;

at

at the report which was already spread of the large salary I paid, of the furniture and servants I had brought, I saw them all touched with the most profound respect. The Abbess, contented with my generosity, had never enquired into my life or morals. In order to deceive her, Mr. *Villebrun* had insisted on the greatness of my family. Even here I could perceive some small remains of envy, at the superior advantages I enjoy'd from fortune, education, and nature. I could not repress my uneasiness at seeing ignorance and superstition stifling the voice of nature, and every hour destroying those inclinations impressed by the finger of the great creator: fancying tears and distress a grateful offering to the deity, and a life of useless indolence a life of piety. After about three hours of impertinence, I was at length left alone.

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M E M O I R S

OF

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PART THE FOURTH.

NOTWITHSTANDING the maxims of the happy and contented *Villebrun*, I found my heart returned to its favourite melancholy, and every emotion take successive possession of my mind. Of what use was my innocence, which could not save me from censure? My sentiments which I knew to be pure, which had even the sanction of my father's approbation, were now blackened by calumny and falsehood, and perhaps might soon be repaid by inconstancy and neglect. Since my return to *Paris*, I had scarcely seen my fickle-admirer.

mirer. For the future I knew not whether I should be permitted to see him. But even supposing this effected; yet his conduct, his manner of thinking served so little to justify my love, that every circumstance made me blush at my faulty passion, while nothing could serve to diminish it.

MR. *Villebrun* had advised me seriously to think of embracing a religion, which, till then, it must be owned I had regarded with detestation: it had already been made use of as a pretext to undo me; its maxims condemned a father who was still most dear to me. To encrease my anxiety, my ingratitude to Lord *W——* served to fill me with remorse. I passed the whole night in these cruel reflections, which however ended in a resolution of sacrificing to decorum, even the expression of my real regards.

IN the morning my Lord came to pay me a visit. He let me know his surprize the evening before, at not finding me at my aunt's. Her confusion and embarrassment, he told me, shewed him her guilt. Trembling for you, I used the most gentle methods to be informed of what had happened. Notwithstanding the precautions she took to disguise the truth, I easily discover'd it; falshood always detects itself. As it was no longer in her power to do you a prejudice, I did not even take the pains to convict her: cold disdain better answered the purposes of revenge. I went in haste to Mr. *Villebrun*, and his servants informed me he had conducted you here. I waited till his return.

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turn. How have I experienced, added his Lordship, with a tender look, how greatly we are affected with every thing that particularly interests a beloved object! Had I not been a stranger here, continued he, I should soon have given you ample satisfaction on the base impostor, who dared to attack your reputation. Even your aunt; your unworthy aunt, should feel my resentment for joining in a conspiracy to blast your honour, and even stooping so low as to attempt to persuade me against a passion, which, tho' it renders me miserable, is my boast; a passion, where your constancy in dislike, is equal to my sincerity. Here I cast down my eyes with concern: being unable to bear the afflicted looks of one I so much esteemed. After some silence, during which he appeared violently agitated, Adieu, Madam, cried he, in a tone of despair, I shall retire to give you no further trouble about a fruitless passion; I go to find the last severest remedy for every human affliction. I shall spare your eyes the uneasiness of seeing a lover whom you would wish to see cured, or not to see at all. For the future I can do you no farther services. Mr. *Villebrun* will answer all purposes of a protector and friend; he will secure you that happiness I only contribute to destroy. Thus saying, he disappeared: my cries pursued him, without being able to bring him back. Affrighted amazed, I remained a long time in the same attitude. Tho' I was to see Lord B*** the same day, it was with the utmost regret that

that I took any concern about adjusting my dress.

IN the afternoon I was told, that Mr. *Villebrun* desired to speak to me. I flew to the parlour, and there found him alone. Smiling at my disconsolate air, don't be afflicted, my dear, cried he, Lord B*** will be here immediately. I had no mind the nuns should see him enter. Yesterday's quarrel may transpire : a rogue discovered, and a woman incensed, to save themselves, will use every opportunity of undoing you. The smallest appearances will be a confirmation of their calumnies. I told Mr. *Villebrun* of Lord *W.*——'s precipitate departure. It grieves, but it does not surprize me, returned he ; I have been long amazed at seeing him a tame witness of your sentiments for another. His generosity has cost him infinite struggles. Alas ! I pity him, and I fear we shall soon have cause for repenting your behaviour to him. But I know your soul too well, to think it capable of being biassed by motives of fortune or interest ; let us discontinue a subject that gives us pain. I am only convinced, that your temper is such, as never to let love destroy your reason or your virtue.—At that instant his Lordship entered the room ; never, never did he appear more beautiful. The grate which separated us, the reflection that I could only see him but at distant intervals, all served to impress his charms more deeply on my imagination. Mr. *Villebrun* left us alone for more than half an hour. As soon as my Lord saw him gone, he burst into the

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the most violent invectives against Madame de Volancourt. Why did I go to any but him? His love and his courage would have given me more ample vengeance than the cool determinations of an old man, by which I was at last immured in a convent. I had a thousand times assured him that I came to *France* for his sake alone. I ought therefore to have relied on him alone; his love should have protected, and his attachments should have guided my conduct. To all this I opposed in vain the decorums which are incumbent on me to observe; these he considered as the dictates of an unmov'd heart, that acted with all the calmness of reason. He would never believe I loved him, till I quitted my convent; till I put myself under his direction; came to a lodging he had prepared for me, depending only on his fidelity; lived only for him who lived only for me: what signified to me the rumours of a world in which I was not known? Were not his respect, his tenderness, more sure protectors than the promises of strangers, who were friendly, only perhaps in order, to usurp an authority over me and my fortune. Ah! my Lord, cried, I, and is it thus you love me? Delicate love would surely be more tender of my reputation. Tho' your passion for me be my greatest, truest treasure, I had rather be deprived of it for ever, than preserve it by a mean condescension. Heaven is my witness, that my heart is wholly yours. If virtue seems to dispute it; that is only to make

make it a present more worthy of your acceptance.

No way convinced, however, by my resistance, his anger began to appear: he even reproached me as having those principles inspired by Lord *W*——, and that I only wanted to stay, that I might have an opportunity of every day admiring his virtues. Lord *W*——, replied I, more generous than you, disdains even to make me uneasy by sorrow for his situation. As soon as he perceived his passion fruitless, he made a resolution of seeing me no more. This morning he took his last farewell. Will you make it a crime that I should lament his distress. He would have thought himself happy, had he believed I had but a part of that love for him, which I have without reserve for you. He would have fallen at my feet, had I but flattered his passion with the most distant hope.

As soon as his Lordship perceived he had no longer a rival to fear, he appeared somewhat satisfied: he pardoned me for not being ready to sacrifice my reputation to follow him. He even was contented at not coming to see me, except in company with Mr. *Villebrun*; a circumstance which perhaps gave me more uneasiness than it did him. At this instant Mr. *Villebrun* entered the room, and promised us an interview as often as was consistent with decency and reason. Tho' it be a disagreeable task to separate two lovers, yet I come, continued he, to apprise his Lordship of going
now

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now that he has an opportunity of passing out unseen.

As soon as Mr. *Villebrun* and I were alone, he proposed to introduce me to Madame *de St. Helena*, she whom he had mentioned the evening before. I fancy, cried the good man smiling, that you have little to add to your dress: when a lover is to be seen, that is seldom neglected. Apprise your woman, and we will set out. While you were with Lord B*****, I informed the Abbess that you would pay whatever visits you thought proper; for it is my maxim, that reason alone must guide people, and I hope you will have enough continued he smiling, to justify my praises. You are now going to visit a lady, in whom it appears so amiable, that you will love it more than ever.

His promise was true. I had no sooner seen Madame *de St. Helena*, than her very aspect, in which her virtues were impressed, inspired me with respect and admiration. Immediately after the natural turn of her expressions, the ease of manners, the amiable gaiety which reflected the calm tranquillity of her mind, changed my admiration into more tender sensations. In about an hour I found myself as easy in her company as if I had lived with her all my life. I desired so earnestly to please her; she seemed possessed of so much sincerity; her manners were so delicate, and yet so frank, that I no longer felt the usual embarrassments upon a first acquaintance. I quit-
 ted her only with a desire to cultivate more closely so amiable an acquaintance. The good

natured *Villebrun* appeared enchanted with my satisfaction. He hoped that in this family I should get over that melancholy which he observed often contributed to cloud my spirits, and render me less agreeable. He, like all others, naturally inclined to gaiety, loved to converse only with the chearful: but nevertheless, sensible of pity, he did not care to see objects he could not comfort or relieve. I must do him the justice to own, I never knew one more ready to assist all that wanted his service; and the satisfactions and happiness of others constituted his most real felicity.

THE next day *Madame de St. Helena* came to visit me, intending to take me with her to dinner. I shall not describe the chosen society which was assembled there, since it was there I first saw you. It was there I was happy enough to inspire you with those sentiments, of which you have given me such frequent testimonies, and which, tho' long past, I still remember with regret. It was in this company I first learned the pleasures which society confers, when refined by taste and united by good nature; when destitute of vanity, and endeavouring not to excel, but to please. I soon perceived, that continual efforts to shine were not wit; nor silence nor severity ill humour. You know how this lady turned the conversation upon the easiest, most interesting topics; and every mind found something to like, some opportunities to please. The company was not composed of those who thought laughing a sign of pleasure, and who
smile

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Smile from habit, yet hate from constitution : no reputation was ever sacrificed to make their pleasures ; nothing became an object of ridicule but those slight faults which even the delinquent could see exposed without shame. Long declamation did not receive the name of reasoning, the argument was started, but not run down. These tender sentiments of humanity united every heart without loading any with useless professions. I never returned from visiting her that I did not find in myself an increased love of virtue. And perhaps, Madam, to this society I owed the victory I gained over the illusions of a passion, which drew me entirely from the respect I owed to myself.

LORD B****, whose passions were only more enflamed by resistance, employed all the charms of seduction to engage me to follow him. His eloquence, in unison with my heart, often shook my resolution. To live with a man I loved to distraction ; to see him without ceasing, and him only ! what should prevent me from pursuing his advice ? Should mere chimerical notions of decorum, a painful decency which ever kept my lover at a distance, and which often made me spend whole hours in the most agonizing anxiety ; while, in the mean time, free from every restraint, wholly with my charmer, I might fly from a world whose censure I disregarded, and whose rancour would be effectually effaced by solid satisfaction. Was not the object of my passion an universe to me ? These seducing images

presented by my lover, animated by the fire of his eloquence, impressed on the most tender heart, frequently silenced even the loudest dictates of my reason, and laid all my prudence asleep. I own to my shame, that his Lordship has often induced me to promise a compliance the day following, but a visit to *Madame de St. Helena* the same day would bring me back to my duty: I could not bear the thought of losing her esteem, and of being no longer able to stand the upbraiding looks of merit and virtue. I returned to the charge with recruited vigour; I boldly undertook to combat my lover, and my own inclinations.

THE history of one of the nuns still farther strengthened my resolution. In weeping for her misfortunes, I felt all the horror of those to which I was tempted to expose myself, in pursuing the dictates of pleasure. This Lady, who was called sister *Louisa*, interested me at first sight: far from being busied in the important trifles that employ the hours of the rest of the sisterhood, addicted to a profound melancholy, she only sought for solitude. At those hours, when the rest were prostrated at the altar in all the ecstacy of enthusiasm, I have seen her eyes bathed in tears, and have perceived the sigh repressed in her rising bosom. Tho' sorrow had dimmed the splendor of her charms, and the agreeable freshness of youth, she still had some remains of beauty, rendered still more touching by languor and distress. The few words I had heard her speak appeared to me so just; the sound of her

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her voice had so much sweetness, that I earnestly sought to be more intimately acquainted with her. Despairing to learn from herself what had been the cause of her present melancholy, I asked it from some of her sister devotees. They informed me, after exclaiming against her meanness, who left God to place her affections on things below, they *charitably* informed me, of all her weaknesses.

I FOUND myself still more concerned at her misfortunes. This young Lady, who in this asylum for piety met only with contempt, was of an illustrious birth. Abandoned by ambitious parents, whose hopes were centered in an only son, she had been educated in the country by a grandmother, of whom she was the darling. Naturally tender and sensible, she early felt a passion for a youth in the neighbourhood, the younger son of a good family, but without friends or fortune. Possessed of an entire liberty, without knowledge of the world, without experience, being constrained by no inspection, she knew not how to deny her lover all those satisfactions in which she found mutual pleasure. In the mean time, apprehensive of the consequences of her unhappy condescension, and not daring to confide in her grandmother, who probably would have saved her, she took the resolution of flying with her lover. Both young, without assistance or fortune, they were soon stopped. A powerful family could not brook the blot cast upon it by a little

country gentleman. Instead therefore of effacing it by marrying their daughter, they abandoned themselves to the fury of resentment; and gave the youth up to the hand of justice. As soon as the young lady was delivered, they obliged her to take the veil; and to drag on a miserable life in a nunnery, regretting past pleasures, tortured with present anxiety, and detesting the authors of her restraint.

I HAD no sooner known the history of this unfortunate girl, than I eagerly sought her confidence and friendship. The pity I testified at her misfortunes, the tears I mixed with hers, soon opened her whole heart. Alas, Madam, what despair, what anguish did I not see painted there? yet still what grandeur and virtue! I never heard her murmur against the authors of her misery. Every day she reproached herself for a weakness which had undone her lover, which had brought to the world an unhappy innocent, condemned from its birth to bear the mother's ignominy. Good Heaven, cried she, in all the bitterness of affliction, thou knowest that I do not regret the pleasures which thy laws condemn; or if my reluctant heart sometimes revolts, my prayers and tears will serve as an expiation. I only ask the power of forgetting my lover, and I hope it is no crime to wish him more happy than myself. For two years, in which I have lived in this seclusion, I have not heard of him. Alas, perhaps even now he is a victim to a crime, the punishment of which should rest wholly upon me.

me. Or perhaps he is no more. My parents may have sacrificed him to their resentments. Alas, were I only to feel the weight of their indignation, they should have my free forgiveness. Thus continually torn by such racking distress, her health was impaired, and an hectic proceeded to finish what her follies had begun.

ONE day as I was seeking her, I saw her return from the room where the nuns see company, and where she never went before,—all trembling;—her looks wild, and scarce able to support herself. I gave her my arm to conduct her to a chamber, where she fell back senseless on a chair. With some trouble I recovered her, when lifting up on me her languishing eyes and holding my hand, adieu, generous friend, said she to me, the hand of death is upon me; I shall quickly be no more. I hastened to put her to bed: her fever was violent; I was for calling help. Stay a moment, cried she with a feeble voice; while I yet have strength remaining, hear the last of my misfortunes. The tender pity you had for my distress was the only comfort I found under it. But now I sink beneath the burthen, I have just seen the unhappy object of my tenderness, my sorrow and regret. After having languished a year in prison, like one of the worst malefactors, he had his liberty given only upon condition of instantly quitting his country. His very father, intimidated by the power of mine, joined in his sentence. For more than a year, without friends, without fortune or support, he has dragged on a life of continual indigence, and yet still more unhappy in be-

ing separated from me, than in being loaded with every other calamity. He has even exposed himself to infinite dangers to see me now once more. Pardon, kind heaven, cried she, the sentiments so dear an object raises in my breast. Happy in dying, as I could only by lengthening my life have encreased my guilt.

I EMPLOYED all my care to calm the agitations of her mind. I eagerly assured her that I only valued the benefits of fortune, as they would enable me to relieve her lover. This assurance seemed for some time to give her some tranquillity; but her disorder had already made too much progress to be restrained. The physicians judged her past recovery. I spent the whole night by her bedside; her soul was continually directed to heaven. "Yes, cried she, pressing my hand, I leave life without regret; heaven will have mercy for one slight offence; and sure it will not utterly abandon a poor youth, who now disputes my affections, which should be wholly directed there. Towards morning she was so weak that she could scarce make me understand a request she made me, to go down at six to the grate where she had promised to meet her lover.

How was my compassion excited at the sight of a youth, who tho' so much depressed with misery, appeared of a most pleasing figure. When I let him know that I came from his mistress; heavens, cried he, with the most distressful accent, shall I never see her more! and is this the reward of my danger and fatigue? With whatever address I attempted to lessen
his

his grief, he soon perceived her real situation, and seemed willing to end his days, since all his hopes were now vanished. I attempted to dissuade him from this gloomy resolution, by assuring him that she might still recover. *Henry* kept him concealed in his chamber; I returned to sister *Louisa*, who only reminded me of my promise, and entreated that I would conjure him, for her sake, by all their dear connexions that he would live. She then appeared to be solely employed in preparing for death, after a few fervent prayers, she finished her miserable existence, at about five in the evening. At the news of her death, which her unhappy lover soon perceived by my tears, I feared every thing from his despair. *Henry* attended him for eight days, during which time he continued in a state of madness. as soon as he was a little recovered I persuaded him to depart.

AFTER urging what I thought most convincing to obviate his fatal purpose, I entreated him to accept of a purse of two thousand crowns, which was at that time all I could command. I saw with what reluctance his pride stooped to accept what his necessities obliged him not to refuse. I made him promise to let me hear from him. I heard about a year after, that, having entered the army he put himself in the way of every danger, and was killed upon a breach which he had mounted before the rest of the assailants. The miserable end of sister *Louisa*, whose real name I could never learn, and the force and courage she had shewn in her last moments, gave me a sincere desire of be-

ing instructed in a religion which afforded such support to the unhappy. I expected in it to find a consolation which I had hitherto sought with so little success. Lord B**** after having for more than a month testified all the violence and force of his passion, fatigued with a return only of sentiments and tenderness, engaged once more than usual assiduity in his former gallantries. In vain did I attempt to reclaim him, by expressions of the most perfect love: I saw him only to lament his inconstancy. His coldness, his indifferent air, which proceeded even to contempt, threw into my reproaches a show of pride, which I no longer preserved when he had taken his leave. The very efforts I made to detest or at least to forget him, presented without ceasing an image too dear, too charming to every sense, to be despised or forgotten. How did the sorrowful remembrance tear my heart! The recollection of the happy moments I had passed with my lover, filled all my hours with complaint and anguish: I blushed at a weakness, which however had its charms. How dreadful is that state wherein we are guided only by sensations which we blush to avow, which reason disowns, yet cannot conquer.

MR. *Villebrun* informed me that the Princess, after having employed all the art of an experienced coquet to bring back his lordship to her lure, at length seemed to forget him for the young Prince of *Beaumont*, a youth possessed of the greatest merit. He continued to observe that Lord B**** soon disputed the victory, that all *Paris*, generally attentive to important
trifles,

trifles, were spectators of the combat. In spite of all that the most cutting jealousy could suggest, I still hoped that the heart of my lover was not wholly alienated, and that he would return, when his vanity and false ambition were satisfied. Notwithstanding his errors and his perfidy, I always found him sensible and generous. Thus, Madam, agitated by all the violent emotions, which pride, that to me had the appearance of reason, could suggest, I never visited Madame *de St. Helena* without envying the happy tranquillity which resided in her house but to which my soul was a stranger.

THOUGH I had formed a design of examining the merits of the controversy between the reformed church and that of *Rome*, I put it off from day to day, but the report of my incredulity became universal. The name of heretic, unbeliever, despiser of religion was so loudly echoed, that the minister himself heard the rumour. To undo me more effectually, my father's obstinacy was added to swell the account of mine; I was represented as a rebellious spirit, who had inherited all his uncomplying resolutions. Though I was but a woman, my beauty, the care bestowed upon me by my father, and my own skill in controversy, demanded the exertion of power to restrain me.

YOU remember at that time, Madam, how much religion was made the subject of every conversation; the prime minister therefore, though one of the most gentle and benevolent of mankind, thought it his duty to see and examine the matter himself. With this view
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he made the first application to my aunt. This lady, who could never pardon me for removing myself from under her authority, and who perhaps flattered herself with being put in possession of my fortune, described my morals, and manners of thinking, in the most odious light, and still pursuing the dictates of revenge, even threw several aspersions upon the equity of her brother-in-law. The minister however, from her violence, readily perceived the ill disguised passion in the picture; and convinced of the probity of *Villebrun*, formed the most lucky prejudice in my favour. The next day Mr. *Villebrun*, who had for many years confined himself only within the circle of a chosen acquaintance, who were ignorant of the noise I made in the world, was surprised at receiving an order to wait on the Prime minister. He had no great difficulty in persuading him of the falsehood of every accusation. The statesman already interested in my favour by a knowledge of the distresses and merit of my unhappy father, was desirous of hearing me himself. Guess then my surprise, Madam, when the nuns came to inform me of a visit from the Prime minister. His affable and benevolent air, and Mr. *Villebrun*, who was with him, soon freed me from my apprehensions. After some obliging compliments, he informed me of the motives of his visit, and still to be more convinced of my innocence, necessarily desired to hear an history of my life, and all my father's misfortunes. Mr. *Villebrun*, who perceived that to vindicate my father I must necessarily
accuse

accuse his brother, desired me to speak without constraint : observing that truth was more dear to him than any relationship, or any connections whatever.

I THEN gave the minister a succinct account of all the injustice which had been done my father, and every injury which was practised to drive him into shameful banishment : The education which I had received, his dying advice, the asylum I sought with his sister, her persecutions, her avarice, and her calumny. I spoke for near an hour without any interruption, except from the minister's sudden exclamations, when shocked with the perfidy of our oppressors. When I had finished ; I cannot, Madam, cried he with an air of affection, I cannot avoid being pleased with knowing those enemies who have blackened your character, since they give me an opportunity of punishing vice, and rewarding virtue. Your accuser is a villain, who shall undergo the punishment which such vices deserve. As for his accomplice, she shall be left to the shame and remorse which must pursue her ; and as for you, expect to be put in possession of those effects which were taken unjustly from your father. I shall put all the power of the law in force to do you justice. Ah, Sir, said I, restrain your zeal for justice in this one instance : I only desire your protection, in order to establish my innocence. As for my aunt, I abandon the fortune she possesses without any regret. This was the last wish of a dying father, whose request has still the weight of a command. It was
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from the assurance of not being disturbed in the possession of my father's fortune, that she afforded me the asylum which for some time I enjoyed. The minister surprised at what he called the greatest effort of generosity, replied, I readily see, Madam, that you have been educated by a philosopher. In a commerce with the world you could never have imbibed sentiments so noble. As benefits cease to be such when disagreeable to the receiver, you are at liberty to determine : with regard to your aunt's fortune, I shall no farther use the zeal with which you have inspired me, for your service, but to make those who have assisted in branding your character, without knowing it, sensible of their injustice and your virtue.

THE pleasure *Mt. Villebrun* received upon this occasion, drew from him almost tears of rapture. I own, it astonished me to hear them praise with so much energy, an action which I only considered as an incumbent duty. *Madame de Clairville* to hide her shame, banished herself to a distant province, and *Madame de Volancourt* learned, not without all the misery of mortified pride, the gratitude she owed me, for a conduct which seemed to reproach the blackness of her own.

THE next day my old protector came with an invitation to dinner, from the minister. I found the company to be made up of those who had assisted in propagating *Madame de Clairville's* scandal. Behold, said the minister, introducing me, behold the young lady whose character you have aspersed without knowing it, and, which

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which when better seen will fully serve to load her accusers with reproach.

IN less than an hour, Madam, I found myself treated as if I had been more than mortal. My confusion and embarrassment, which upon another occasion would have been construed into unpolished rusticity, were now applauded as marks of ingenuous simplicity, which is ignorant of its own perfections. I was persuaded to repeat some of the particulars of my history, and they were all thought marvellous and surprising. I was complimented with all the encomiums, and treated with every illusion with which these are loaded, who are honoured and protected by the great. This was a fine method of flattering the minister, who took a pleasure in being thought to protect and countenance that innocence and virtue, which had been oppressed by his predecessor. It now therefore became fashionable to admire and praise me. By the repeated eulogies bestowed on my generosity, it seemed to me that this virtue was but little known among the polite. The old Dutchess of *Mirepoix* particularly conceived a violent affection for me. From her first coming to court she had taken it into her head to become the patroness of wit and learning. To her were addressed all new dedications, she gave some pensions to men of abilities, and once or twice a week presided in a society of the learned. Some of these wrote verses in honour of me. At that time the works of *Descartes* and *Mallebranche* were seen upon the most fashionable toilets. The Dutchess trailed me about with
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her wherever she went; she praised me in every company; I understood two or three different languages, I reasoned mathematically; in short, Madam, for more than a month I continued in a whirl, which so turned my brain, that I actually forgot myself. Yet after all, the air of the court resembles those strong perfumes, which after intoxicating you, only leave an aching head. However transported I might be with all I saw, yet still I found the image of Lord B*** lurking in my breast. The court I thought was the place where I might most surely expect to find him, and yet he did not appear. I was informed that he was with the Princess in the country; but as soon as I appeared at court she brought him back to *Paris*. It was known that I had disputed the victory, and that I fancied was a reason why many of my own sex took some pains in crying up my charms. This probably was their reason for employing all their art in dressing me for an entertainment given by his majesty. I was conducted thither by the old Dutches, who was now with me eternally. I had the honour of saluting the Queen of *England*. On hearing my mother's name, she loaded me with caresses. Though these peculiar distinctions gave me great satisfaction, and turned the eyes of the company upon me, yet, madam, I soon felt stronger emotions. The sight of Lord B*** in company with the Princess my rival, planted daggers in my heart. I no longer remembered the proper manner in which I was to behave. The little Marquis told me, smiling, that the Princess

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Princess asked if I was the thing that was so much talked of ? Yet, Madam, continued he, with all her contempt she could not hide the emotions of jealousy.

IN fact Lord B*** kept his eyes continually fixed upon me : I saw them filled with tenderness ; a glance into which he had thrown all the language of repentance, sorrow, and love, pierced my heart, and beat in every vein. The Marquis, attentive to whatever offered an opportunity of ridicule, cried out, Let me Perish if the Princess can stand it : and soon after she actually went off, taking his Lordship with her, who lent her his hand. Fearing the raillery of the Marquis, who stuck by me the whole day, I assumed an air of such content, that even he was mistaken.

FROM this time, Madam, the life I led became insupportable. I found that what had first the appearance, of gaiety, and pleasure, was only a painful servitude. The illusion now disappeared. I saw nothing but anxiety in the train of those tumultuous amusements, which like loud music are ever best at a distance. I perceived that all who pretended only to court pleasure, were internally guided by interest and ambition. That, the politeness which pleases and captivates, was frequently but the covering of envy and falsehood. That the master-piece of art among courtiers was to seize the appearances of virtue, but sacrifice all to interest alone. In a word, that the whole study of the people of this country, was
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to keep the soul concealed even from the nicest inspection.

I FOUND that my mind was neither pliant enough, nor sufficiently expert to pursue such a course. The efforts I had already made to conceal my heart cost me too much. To sacrifice nature, and all my happiness to the glittering satisfactions of decorum, through all the changes of fashion; which appear and disappear incessantly like vapours, which deceive the traveller; to sacrifice to such satisfactions, was, I thought, earning them by far too dearly. I only therefore sought for a favourable moment to retire.

THE minister offered me a place or two at court that might fix me there with honour; but I shewed so much reluctance, and asked so much time to consider, that I heard no more of it. After having served the purposes of his vanity for some time, he soon left me to myself. The enthusiasm with which I had at first inspired him soon cooled, and I did not study to revive the flame. The court now perceived that I should never be more than a mere domestic animal, created to make only one man happy. The ladies were of opinion, that under the appearance of simplicity, I was an errant coquet: so that when I asked permission to return to my retreat, it was granted without difficulty.

UPON returning I sent to Mr. *Villebrune* to entreat him to carry me again to *Madame de St. Helena's*: but he informed me that she, had for some time been in the country with you.

you. I own, Madam, this news disconcerted me. The charms of an amiable society had induced me to give up a court-life without regret; but an entire solitude affrighted me. I felt, for some days, that total stagnation of sentiment which succeeds a round of pleasure, which only fits the mind for new desires, and often creates wants that we were insensible of before. When my heart began to resume its usual operations, it soon felt the revival of its ancient flame; the image of Lord B*** had been too deeply impressed to be soon effaced. In the midst of my chagrin at his absence, I still formed to myself the most pleasing illusions. I had seen my lover tender and sensible one moment; and that very moment was to me hours of happiness. But the time was coming in which I was to be deprived even of hope itself.

I HAVE not for some time spoken of Lord W———. My never receiving any accounts of his welfare gave me some disquietude. He had concealed the place of his retreat from me and from all the rest of his acquaintance. I know not how I was affected, whether with joy or uneasiness, when one morning my woman told me that he was below. I went to receive him with extreme apprehension; I scarce knew him again. His eyes were sunk and languid; and his face looked pale and ghastly. I see, Madam, cried he, in a faltering accent, that this is a visit you did not expect; and why should you expect one you had no wish to see? Ah, my Lord, returned I, must
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I still find you unfortunate and unkind ! During your absence of three months, my friendship felt most sensibly for you and for myself. Talk no more of friendship, returned he ; the very name makes me miserable. My love, I find, has nothing to hope for, and it is now more violent than ever. My efforts to conquer it, only fix it more firmly in my heart. Can the most inconstant, the most perfidious of mankind, still deprive me of your heart ? Shall he for ever keep possession ? Speak then my doom, whether life or death. I can no longer bear the horrors that surround me. With downcast eyes, and trembling lips, I found myself unable to answer. My dear Miss, said Lord *W*——, while the tears rolled down his cheek, at least suffer yourself to be moved by pity, if not by love. Heaven is my witness I sacrificed all my own hopes of happiness as long as I thought my rival could give you any. But at present I know he betrays and abandons you. Fly then, fly a country, the manners of which are opposite to your virtue. My heart which adores your merit is only worthy to possess it. Alas, I desire not to be loved ; only resolve to quit a place unworthy of so much perfection. Follow me, and soon.— Here he stopped, and fixed his eyes upon me filled with trouble and emotion. I could not answer him ; I supported myself on my chair, and he seizing my hand, bathed it with his tears. Alas, Madam, they penetrated to my very heart. I could have wished to have been his, and his alone. Never did I sustain such a struggle ;
but

but my lover whom I wished to tear from my heart, was impressed there in all his charms. I saw, I heard him; and the remembrance of his former kindness made me entirely his own. In this violent state I could not speak a single word. I was fearful of increasing the despair of a man whom I infinitely esteemed from a motive of gratitude, and for his own merit. Yet still he was no way so dear to me as the man I loved, nor even as the distant hopes which I still indulged. At length interrupting this painful silence, it is done then, cried he, and all my hopes are over; your tears too surely tell me so; you weep over the sacrifice you are going to offer. He stopped once more; I beheld him tremble, and incapable of sustaining the conflict; Alas, my Lord, said I, all my wishes are in your favour; but yet I would not make you unhappy; time——time, interrupted he with impetuosity, can never have any effect on a heart over which neither glory, shame, nor pity, can prevail. Adieu, Madam, continued he with a wild look, I shall shortly find a cure. Alas, my Lord, cried I, stop a moment; do not deprive me of my friend. I have already too much regretted his absence.

HE remained some time buried in a profound reverie, and recovered only to tell me with a resolute tone of voice, and in a manner perfectly calm; I only ask, Madam, that you will let me know your whole soul without disguise; in the name of that friendship which you profess, give me to-morrow a picture of all your sentiments. This I think I have a right to demand.

mand. Examine your heart and tell me all that I have to have to hope for : I give you but one day to consider, and thus saying he took his leave

FOR more than three hours I was agitated with emotions the most opposite and violent. I called my pride and reputation to my assistance ; I recollected Lord *W*——'s tenderness, sincerity, merit, and generosity. I expatiated upon the affronts offered me by Lord *B**** ; my reason condemned him ; but even while I condemned, I pitied him. After having shed a torrent of tears for my shameful weakness, and perhaps more for being obliged to make such an effort, I at last sunk under my passion. I therefore took a resolution of informing his Lordship of my real sentiments, but at the same time of lessening, by all my art, the blow he must receive from such an information. I endeavoured to express all the sentiments of gratitude and esteem with which he had inspired me ; the desire I had of making him happy, and the affliction I received at his uneasiness.

I DESCRIBED the sensations with which he had inspired me, and frankly displayed my hopes of making him happy. I assured him I would never more see Lord *B****, and that he should no longer be made miserable by beholding a passion which might only serve to encrease his despair. In short, I promised to be his, when by time, and the continual impression of his virtues, I should find my former passion extinguished. My whole soul was expressed

pressed in the description I gave him. He might see the conflicts of my heart, the resolutions and the vows it had formed in his favour, and at the same time the ties that held it in its accustomed slavery. *Henry* carried this letter, or rather paquet, which I had been the whole night writing. He informed me at his return, that he had seen his Lordship, whom he found walking with abrupt and hasty strides. His valet de chambre was in the utmost apprehensions from the state in which he saw his master. He added, that his Lordship appeared astonished upon receiving my letter, and gave immediate orders that none should be admitted into his chamber, except when he called.

THO' there was nothing in this information that should make me uneasy, I felt an unaccountable degree of anxiety. The whole day I found my respiration impeded, and an involuntary shivering succeeded at intervals. My sleep was disturbed by the most terrifying images, and I started from my dreams in an agony. My woman ran to my assistance, she found me all over trembling, and my forehead bathed in a cold sweat. I made her stay with me, and bring a light, for darkness only conspired to encrease my terrors. I was in that wretched state of suspense where the mind fears, yet wishes for the elucidation of some expected calamity. I shuddered with horror when told, that his Lordship's valet de chambre was below. Alas, Madam, I had but too much reason to fear this terrible moment.

ment. I read in the looks of this desponding servant, all that the fatal letter he put into my hands was about to unfold. It was to this effect, Madam, and even at this interval of twenty years, I do not repeat it without the strongest emotions.

“THAT virtue, Madam, which I have so earnestly sought, has at last given me up to destruction. From the time that my reason shewed me the vices and miseries of mankind, I learned to detest my wretched existence. My desires were every moment unstable, and changing; new objects presented without giving satisfaction, and plunged me in that dismal state of apathy which is more terrible even than death, and which renders life an insupportable load of misery. Still, however, a gleam of hope would come to allure me, and made me expect that I yet might be happy, if a suitable object offered to fill the vacuity of my wishes. This I sought; and not being able to find, I was resolved to launch into the bosom of eternity, since every satisfaction here was long exhausted. But I saw you. Your graces, your beauty, prepared my soul to give a proper reception to your virtues, and soon I was taught to admire them. This charming picture which I still continue to contemplate, gave me a prospect of future pleasure. I found my wish for life again renewed; a look, a word from you revived all my languishing desires, and my whole form seemed susceptible of new delights. Happy moments, delicious dreams, you are now fled for ever.

I knew

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I knew you, I felt you, only to regret the loss with more severe distress. The resistance which I found from an heart that I had supposed not pre-engaged, and open to the first impression, now began to dissipate the flattering illusions. But the charms of a tender friendship promised with sincerity, and expressed with such elegant simplicity, the sympathy for my passion so justly characterised in your concern for what I felt, still gave my languishing hopes a new prospect of happiness. I complained only of being loved but feebly: yet still I fancied that I was the object of your esteem, and I hoped that my merit and perseverance would at length surmount every difficulty. Her innocence and virtue, I would say to myself, feels only the calm sensations of friendship and esteem. Thus I turned your insensibility to a virtue. How little did I know of the real situation of your heart? Your sighs I imputed to your fears of harbouring a passion to which your heart was a stranger; your very pain in separation I imputed, not to friendship, but growing love. But at last the illusion is vanished, and nothing but misery rises on the desolated prospect. Good gods! how could I see a rival, a beloved rival, without burying a poinard in his breast, and afterwards plunging it into my own. But an unwillingness to make you wretched disarmed my fury. In seeing your tears fall, I was sensible only of your afflictions. I don't complain of having been deceived. You never left me other hopes than those which your good nature suggested

gested to console my despair. While I perceived your efforts to bend your inclinations in my favour, I was not quite miserable. When I saw those efforts endanger your life, how did I fly to your succour, and even with my own hand introduced my rival, in order to prolong that life which to me, was become dearer than my own. Yet, strange inconsistency, I no sooner saw you once more recovered, than I again felt all the rage of jealousy and disappointment. In vain did I endeavour to form my mind to that heroism of approving whatever gave satisfaction to the beloved object, I found such pleasure only to be the temporary resource of pride, and a mere creature of empty declamation. Distressed at seeing what I had not fortitude to bear, I found new difficulty in separation. Absent from you, the image of your charms, your virtues; my rival in possession of that treasure, which alone I wished were mine, all conspired to blacken my solitude with melancholy, and involve me in the horrors of despair. I knew that my rival so favoured was incapable of making a right estimate of his possession. This still cast a feeble gleam of comfort on my soul. I flew upon the wings of deceitful appearances. Alas, my complaints and my tears only inspired a feeble pity. An ungrateful lover now possesses all that heaven of happiness, without being sensible of the bliss. I love, and yet can never hope for a return. Even the constancy with which I am opposed, adds new charms to my dear undoer. No remedy but death remains to terminate

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minate the hateful scene. Adieu, Madam! when this letter reaches you, I shall be no more. Think sometimes at least of a wretch, who dying thought only on you. Even in this gloomy pleasure which I find in describing my distress, I could still be pleased with thinking that I had some small share in that sympathetic bosom. Adieu.——It is resolved. I shall never again see the object of my adoration.——If a sigh or a tear fall for my wretched catastrophe—Alas, how does the recollection of your charms unman me!—My hand trembles as it prepares to strike the blow.—Good heavens, if it were possible that I could be loved by her whom all must love!—But vain hope; let my rival engross all that pleasure: my glory, my honour calls me away; may your life be far more happy than mine has been——may your lover—But now is not the time to disguise my sentiments; the detested idea of a rival even embitters my agonizing moments of departure. Let me die, let me be at least innocent of any blood but my own. My passion will soon be extinguished in death. It is done. The blow is struck. Farewel for ever.”

IMAGINE, Madam, what I felt upon reading this terrible epistle: I interrupted every sentence, with demanding if the contents could be true? I feared, and yet desired to know the smallest circumstance. The valet de chambre, all in tears, informed me that his unhappy master had shut himself up for three hours after receiving my letter. That he

then went out, desiring none to follow him. Upon his return he ordered that none should enter his chamber for four hours; at the end of which time, that they should carry a letter and a box addressed to me, and which would be found upon his table for that purpose. Alas, continued the afflicted servant, I had often seen my master ready to destroy himself, but he now seemed so much beside himself, that after making some efforts to stay by him, when forced to leave the room, I still waited at the door, which he locked on the inside. During an interval of two hours, I heard no noise. I even fancied that he slept. I left the door, but scarce was I got to the bottom of the stairs, when I was alarmed by the discharge of a pistol. I broke open the door and ran in. How can I describe such a melancholy spectacle. My master lay without life, bathed in his blood. Struck with terror, I flew to one of his friends, who undertook to hush up the affair in silence, and to perform his last will, which he left written on the table. By his order I have come to put this box and letter into your Ladyship's hands. For my own part, I shall haste from a place in which I saw a master expire, who has loaded me with favours, and whose death I shall for ever regret. So saying, he left me in a situation more terrible than is possible to be described.

ALL my senses were congealed with horror and affright. I was taken from the apartment where I then was, without perceiving it; for six hours I was buried in a lethargic consternation.

nation. I was spoke to, and yet could return no answer; all my limbs were seized with a violent tremor. I was bled and put to bed, without shewing any signs of consciousness. I should certainly have been more happy in such a state, where the soul from the violence of its concussion, remains insensible of the cause of the shock. But a torrent of tears brought me back to sensibility, and shewed me the horror of my situation. It is done then, I cried, and he is no more, and it is I who have given him the fatal blow. I read over and over his dreadful letter. My despair drove me from every object that might serve to alleviate my grief: like those distracted wretches who exercise their rage on themselves alone, my heart seemed set upon its own undoing. Nothing undoubtedly but my weakness could have saved me from the effects of my fury. I was unable to resist the torments of remorse. At one time I became so odious to myself, that I untied the bandage on my arm; but the maid, who perceived my blood flowing, saved me from this first access of despair. I recovered only to feel my misfortunes in all their extent. Upon opening the box sent by the unfortunate nobleman, my sorrow was redoubled at seeing the marks of his sincere, but fatal attachment. It contained a diamond of immense value, which I have since worn; his picture enriched with precious stones, and bills to the amount of an hundred thousand crowns, with these words:

“DEIGN to accept the feeble expressions of a passion which death alone can extinguish.

At least when I am no more, let there be something to recall to your remembrance, one, who though not more deserving, was at least more true than the generality of lovers."

No, my Lord, cried I, as if he heard me, no, you will never be blotted from that breast which you fill with sorrow and regret. Ah, my father, cried I, in the midst of my emotion, why have you taught me to know those virtues which have been since so fatal. If I could but dissemble in the least, the most generous of all mankind had still been living. My friendship would have borrowed the warmth of affection; I might have deceived him, and yet have made him happy. These afflicting thoughts which never forsook me, the image of his lordship, in all the horrors of death, plunged me into such a state of melancholy, that every thing became odious. I even fancied that Lord B*** himself shared a part of this aversion. How many times did I form a design of returning to my former solitude. I believe, Madam, I should have put this project in execution, had not new sentiments, more flattering than any I had hitherto experienced, in some measure dissipated the cloud that hung over me. In order to inform you of the source of that consolation which restored me to my former tranquillity, you must know, Madam, that Mr. *Villebrun*, the only person admitted to see me for more than a month, had frequently attempted to restore me to serenity, by his moral and good humour; but his remedies were ineffectual, as they reached

reached only my reason, and as my breast was the seat of my malady.

THE abbess came one day to entreat the favour of one of my apartments for a Lady who had come from the country to solicit a law suit; she only wants it, continued she, for a few days, and will be equally obliged with me upon your compliance. This proposal was very disagreeable, but as a refusal always appeared odious to me, when it was in my power to grant the favour solicited, I complied with the abbess's request. One request only introduced another, so that continuing her civilities and professions, she at last reduced me to a single chamber, and had the use of my furniture in the rest. Nothing could be more grateful and fawning than the good abbess upon this occasion, who made her new lodger pay over again for what I had already paid more than a double equivalent. The pleasure of a good natured action in some measure diminished my regret at making a new acquaintance, and which I intended to cultivate no farther than mere decency should require. Yet, Madam, it was from this object of my apprehensions, that I was to receive all that satisfaction which I soon experienced.

THE next morning my new neighbour, who was called the Marchioness of *Ravennes* came to pay me a visit. I had been so much prejudiced against every thing that came from the provinces, that I had already armed myself with patience to undergo the fatiguing ceremony, and had assumed a cool politeness which

I fancied most proper to keep her at a distance. But I had scarce passed a moment in her company when I perceived the injustice of my prejudices.

THE Marchioness was possessed of all the graces of a fine figure ; to these was joined that noble air which seemed to speak and exact respect. After the first compliments, in which nothing but the ordinary trifles of civility passed, she began to give her conversation an air of perfect elegance and unstudied politeness, and even made the disagreeable interval of a first visit perfectly pleasing. Every word she spoke seemed the dictate of her heart, her soul rose to her lips, and sparkled in her eye, and every action, every sentiment raised in her hearers the strongest interest in her favour.

EXPERIENCE, Madam, has convinced me that the strictest friendships always commence with the first interview, when the mind finds an object on which to repose all its pleasures and concerns. When the understanding alone examines that merit to which it cannot refuse its esteem and approbation, the friendship that results from such a connection has all the disinterested coolness of reason. But you will say that we may be deceived by this first interview. I confess it, Madam, but we cannot be long deceived. The heart interested in the discovery, gives the understanding more industry and penetration for the search. We only regard those objects with assiduity, in which we have a great concern. Love, which alone demands a strong emotion of the senses, ought to
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fear a ray that may thus dissipate its illusions. But friendship which is only fed by an union of souls, can only be nourished by a constant succession of virtues. And if this first emotion of sensibility, in endeavouring to examine what you desire to find amiable, happens to succeed, it is then a work entirely of sentiment, and friendship thus established differs only from love, by wanting its doubts, perplexities, jealousies, and fears. I have often been surprized that the name of friendship should be given to that union, lasting indeed, but cool, in which nothing but reason has a part. In such a relation, whole years may pass without either side being in the least solicitous for a renewal of affection; every object fills up the void of absence which is felt without regret. But I perceive, Madam, I have wandered too far in describing what only may be pleasing to myself; you would rather chuse, perhaps, to hear how I come to conceive such sublime and masculine notions of friendship. Believe me, Madam, love may deceive us, but in friendship, we build upon more certain grounds, and I can describe the object which filled my breast with that pleasing sympathy, without any danger of exaggeration in the picture.

THE Marchioness of *Ravennes*, of whom I have been speaking, was remarkable for the regularity of her features, and the just proportion of her stature. When I first commenced my acquaintance, she was beginning to lose the early bloom of youth; but so just an expression accompanied every word and gesture,

that this defect was scarcely perceived. The air of natural grandeur which appeared in all she said or did, might by some, be at first mistaken for pride, as she was generally cool to those who were not of her acquaintance. Yet this coldness with which I have heard her often reproached, was neither disdain nor contempt; it was nothing more than a dislike to appear busy or officious. Those adulations, and praise given at the beginning of an acquaintance, are only the arts of the ignorant or vain, who give applause in order to exact it in turn, and this was what the Marchioness never seemed solicitous to obtain. Nothing but a desire to please her companions could induce her to stray beyond the bounds of her natural simplicity. It was first necessary to please her, before it was possible to enjoy all the graces of her wit and beauty. Under the veil of pleasure you saw all her beauties distinctly speak a variety of animated virtue. Her wit gave force to her simplicity, and her simplicity made the sallies of her imagination appear more natural. None ever expressed their feeling with such exquisite sensibility; but then it was necessary first to excite them. In ten years intimacy with that Lady, I never once found her willing to appear witty for the pleasure of being reputed a wit; on the contrary, it appeared as if she only studied the most natural way of expressing every occurrence, and the grace of novelty seemed to force itself into her conversation. As her expressions were ever the result of sentiment, they were always animated.

mated. You could never perceive either the efforts of reflection, nor the preparations of art. They were easy, unstudied and natural, and like those beauties who seeming regardless of giving pleasure, thus become more pleasing. Having early enjoyed the liberties of widowhood, she had no other trouble to discompose her but that of settling her affairs which were left in some disorder, and even in the courts of justice, her judges were often surprized at the depth of her judgment, and at her knowledge in the sciences, to which even themselves were scarce equal. No person ever had concerns with her who did not admire her rectitude and integrity. Her promise was to her the most solemn obligation, an obligation to which she would sacrifice her whole fortune. Oeconomy and prudence were the only arts she made use of to manage her concerns. She was unacquainted with all those obscure turns in which the base sometimes deceive, and are more frequently deceived themselves. Though she was possessed of that delicacy of sentiment which is only to be found in polite life, yet it was not the most pleasing part of her conversation; it was that expansive good nature which animated all her words and actions, but which was particularly shewn to her intimate acquaintance. She had been reproached for wanting those delicate sensations, which often prevent a request, and oblige by anticipation, yet still her favours were bestowed with the most submissive delicacy. One thing remarkable in her character was, that she never made enemies;

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she was ever grateful for benefits received, and never mindful of former injuries. It is true that absence sometimes blotted a friend from her memory; and her dearest acquaintance often experienced a coldness upon renewing their former intimacy; so that with a great share of reason she is, however, possessed of some little prejudices. Though none were more pleased with all around them, yet none applauded less than she. But these small faults served as shades, and gave a nobler air to her virtues. Every thing she said or did was interesting, because her words and actions proceeded from an heart you could not avoid esteeming. What grandeur in her sentiments! What sagacity in her understanding! What delicate sensibility in her heart!

PARDON, Madam, this scrupulous exactness, in my description of one of the most pleasing objects in nature. I only am this minute to justify the warmth of my friendship for her upon so slight an acquaintance. My heart was at once sensible of her virtues, and from the first moment I beheld, I was sincerely her friend. I soon found my habitual melancholy beginning to disappear. I was like those who are introduced to the light after long confinement in darkness. My dejected and melancholy air, at first interested her in my favour. After some visits received and returned, she seemed desirous of knowing the cause of my uneasiness. This request seemed only the result of her friendship; and I gratified it with the most unreserved sincerity. We cease in
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some measure to feel our misfortunes, when we repose them in a faithful and generous breast. Friendship is a balm that heals all the wounds of the tortured heart. The Marchioness having discovered the cause of my griefs, applied the proper remedies, and mixed with serious advices, all the charm of refined sentiment. Besides she was so grateful for the services which were done her by Mr. *Villebrun*, at my recommendation, that instead of partaking in the pleasures of the town, she spent all her leisure moments in my company. I perceived my soul acquire new strength daily, and whenever I found myself oppressed with disagreeable recollection, I flew to find comfort in the society of the fair Marchioness.

THUS, Madam, did the conversation of a female friend insensibly banish my afflictions; I was not yet perfectly easy; but I soon hoped to enjoy unmolested tranquillity. I still however, felt in my breast that a single glance from Lord B****, would rekindle my almost extinguished flame. But I had formed a resolution to fly from him, and what was no small conquest, this resolution gave me no uneasiness. The fear of meeting him, however, kept me within, and I continued at home notwithstanding all the solicitations of Mr. *Villebrun* to the contrary. Thus I tasted that tranquil state, which, without pleasure, is however, free from pain, when the sight of what I so carefully avoided, again plunged me in distresses greater than I had ever experienced before. But let me not anticipate the events, but go through a detail,

a detail, that nothing, Madam, but my friendship for you could induce me to repeat.

MR. *Villebrun*, my generous friend, paid me a visit one day, and with eyes sparkling with joy, informed me that Lord B*** still loved me. I have just left him, continued he, and never yet have I seen an heart so sincerely touched with passion. With what fire did he not paint the charms of his dear little rustic, and abjure his former inconstancy; he imagines no happiness equal to the pleasure of being for ever united to the only object of his wishes, and will be here to make those protestations at your feet. His father, who tenderly loves him, will not be averse to his generous passion. Though he should withhold his consent, yet when he sees the lady, there is no danger, except from his becoming his son's rival. He cannot refuse, since the loss of an only son would be the consequence of his severity.

ALL this was delivered with so facetious and good humoured an air, and I was so astonished at the news, that had I not been previously acquainted with his excellent understanding, I should certainly have taken him for a dotard. Perceiving doubt and hesitation mixed with a pleasing surprize in my looks, be assured, my dear, continued he, I would not willingly disappoint you with false hopes, which would only again plunge you in former distress; what you have heard is even less than what I have seen. An air of truth and sincerity
seemed.

seemed to enforce all he told me ; so that I am convinced you have nothing more to fear from his inconstancy. But to assure you more certainly of this, he is resolved not to appear before you till he has obtained the consent of his father, to shew you that his intentions are honourable. Your fortune, of which I informed him, seemed to give him no other pleasure than that it will be a means of more easily obtaining his father's consent. Now, continued this good man, smiling, you, Madam, are the best judge, whether the assurances I made him on your side were prudent. Whether the promises I gave him of obtaining your forgiveness were premature.

No, no, that blush, that tender emotion, those sighs answer me that I have not acted wrong. Come, come, give a loose to your honest joy, nor fear from my presence ought but the most sincere sympathy.

DESIROUS to know, even to the minutest circumstance, an information that I could scarcely credit, I made my guardian repeat every circumstance several times over. His Lordship, continued he, even wept, at my account of your constancy, and at the death of the *W*———. He even exclaimed, that an universe were not able to repay such virtues as your's. He hated, reviled all that had kept him from his happiness. And am I still loved, said he, by that most excellent of women ; I go to demand her, or death

death, from a father, who shall know the whole situation of my heart. And, continued Mr. *Villebrun*, from the description he gave me of his father, I have the greatest reason to think he will succeed. Desires so impetuous as his, supported with eloquence so prevailing, will surmount every obstacle. He is possessed of that kind of skill which works every mind into conformity to its own. To-morrow, continued he, I am almost certain of bringing him crowned with constancy, and triumphant in returning virtue. I consent, replied I, if he be really reformed, as you describe him. Your simplicity returned he, pleases me so much, that if I knew where to find him, I would bring him, this very instant: but to-morrow be assured, that you shall see the loved youth, and in truth he seems to merit your affection. I am desirous of being a spectator of this tender interview. To see others happy, is to me the greatest happiness. Adieu, my dear, prepare yourself for rapture, which I shall not only endeavour to encrease, but to hasten.

ALL my feelings, after the departure of Mr. *Villebrun*, are past description. For an hour I was almost exalted above myself. Love was soon to be my happiness and my glory. My lover, who had cost me so much inquietude, now felt a mutual passion, and was going to be all my own,—I lived only for him. Yet still, Madam, I was strangely apprehensive; for which I was unable to account. The Marchioness assured me, but in vain, that it
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was only the natural effect of a sudden transition from sorrow to joy : that the heart overpowered with pleasure, sinks beneath the weight, and wears the appearance of affliction. But our sensations are neither the result of reason, nor can reason account for their variety. I knew my present grief was ridiculous, yet I found myself unable to suppress it. At night, my sleep was not that pleasing repose inspired by true pleasure. I rose at midnight and went to find my female friend ; I felt an inquietude in my thoughts that nothing could settle. The marchioness, who made my uneasiness a subject of ridicule, represented to my imagination every object that seemed to promise me felicity. It required the utmost stretch of her complaisance, to bear with the peevishness of my disposition.

THE next day passed without hearing from Mr. *Villebrun*. I sent to my guardian's house, but was informed that he was not at home ; what were my thoughts in this tedious interval of suspense ? I ruminated over all the actions of my life, and endeavoured to draw consequences from every former occurrence. In short, I fancied that it was pre-determined, that I was not born to happiness ; and I insensibly gave way to sorrow.

AT day-break a ray of hope afforded me some consolation. I sent *Henry* with all haste to Mr. *Villebrun*, with orders not to come back without an answer. I waited his return for two hours with impatience ; I could no longer endure my afflicting suspense ; I was quite

quite out of breath with my frequent visits to the window. I don't know, Madam, if all the world are like me ; but suspense is a situation that I was never able to support. My mind must be determined either way, it must have some fixed object on which to rely : Alas, it required all my strength to support the trial I was to undergo.

My maid, however, at last, arrived instead of the servant I expected, to inform me that a tall gentleman she had never seen before earnestly desired to see me. I was immediately struck with the resemblance between this stranger and my lover. He had scarcely spoke, when I conjectured that it must be his father. He soon informed me of it himself. You see, Madam, said he to me, the unfortunate father of Lord B***. Be generous enough to save a lover that adores you. The ardour with which he solicits this alliance, is the only hope I have of saving him. I apprehend that he sight of a person so dear to him, may prevent him from falling into those excesses upon the very brink of which he now stands ; but let us haste, Madam, we have not a moment to lose.

In the utmost astonishment, and scarce able to move, I summoned all my strength to follow the parent of him I loved. The horses, though driven with all possible haste, scarce seemed to move. The distance was such, that in going to the place I had sufficient time to learn the whole of the unfortunate Lord B***'s adventure. Yesterday, said his weeping father,

ther, I made him a promise of crowning his hopes with your love. He had given me so strong a picture of his own passion, and had described you with such a warmth of fancy, that I only desired to see you, in order to reward his constancy. Yesterday it was that I proposed myself the most sincere pleasure I ever felt, that of uniting him with you. He promised to come and dine with me, I waited for him till four. I began to be uneasy when his valet de chambre, in all the agony of distress, came to inform me, that I soon was no longer to have a son, and that I should seize that very moment of coming to see him. I found his information was but too true. When I arrived, my son was insensible, nor for a whole hour did he shew any signs of life. When the surgeons had probed his Wound and put on the first dressing, I saw in their faces that their assistance was to no manner of purpose. I was yet Ignorant who it was that gave the fatal blow. His servant could only inform me, that he had seen the Prince of *** leave the *Tuilleries* with his master, who had given orders not to be followed. That in about an hour an unknown servant came to desire him to fly to his Lordship's assistance near the wood of Vincennes, where a surgeon had been sent already. That there he found him waltering in his blood, and that with a feeble and dying voice he ordered me to be sent for. As soon as my son, by proper assistance, was come to his senses, stretching forth his hand, he addressed me thus. Pardon me, Sir ! my errors.

errors will soon be atoned for by approaching death. A fatal vanity has conducted me to my grave. The Prince of *** displeased at my success in the conquest of a lady to whom he had prior claims, and probably inspired by the resentment of the Princess *Charolais*, who now resented my inconstancy; he, I say, was prevailed upon to insult me upon the *Tuilleries*. I followed him for satisfaction. After having by superior skill disarmed him, I too generously offered him again his sword; but the base man finding himself wounded, and perceiving his blood to flow, stabbed me to the heart before I was prepared to ward off the injury. I lost all sense upon falling, nor do I know how I came where I now find myself. The slightest motion, continues the old nobleman, seemed so painful, that his surgeons ordered him to speak no more. He had only strength enough to desire I would send a servant to Mr. *Villebrun's* to let him know of his situation: an interval of fainting soon after made me fear his end was approaching. Towards midnight, being a little more easy and come to himself; he made signs for Mr. *Villebrun* and me to approach his bed. For God's sake, dear Sir, said he to me, let me see the dear lady for whom I wish to live, and whose I intend to die. If you try to prevail, I am sure she will not refuse me this last visit. I came as soon as day began to appear, I have no hopes but in the comfort you may bring, though when I quitted him he was in so bad a way, that I am apprehensive

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apprehensive whether I shall find him alive at our return.

THINK of what I suffered during this terrible recital ! every word that shewed me the wretched situation of my lover, was a poniard to my heart. We came to the place where he lay without my being able to utter a word. Mr. *Villebrun*, who came to meet us, as soon as he heard the coach at the door, informed us, by his looks, of what we so much feared. Is my son still alive, cried his disconsolate father. He barely lives, returned the other, the noise of the coach roused him, in some measure, from his lethargic situation. But haste to bring him relief, at least cries he to me, taking my hand, have courage enough not to distress the poor dying youth with your sorrow. Only shew your love and not your concern ; seem to entertain hopes of his recovery, and that may in some measure protract his end. " Alas then, and must he die ! " I had only strength to pronounce these words, when I found myself by the bed in which his lordship lay ; what a sight was this to a tender lover like me ! a lover who had flattered herself the evening before with a completion of every wish ! A deadly paleness had spread itself over his whole visage, the lustre of his eye was extinct, his respiration laborious, his head reclined ; thus it was I saw for the last time the most beloved of mankind. See, my son, said his father, who held him in his arms, see the lady for whom you testified so much concern. On hearing my name, he seemed to revive from his state of stupefaction, and heaving

ing a deep sigh offered me his hand. I could only press it and bathe it with my tears. My tenderness seemed to call him back to life; he raised his dying eyes upon me, and seeing the tears which all my efforts could not repress, ah, Madam, cried, with a voice that could scarce be heard, how guilty have I been! how severely now do I feel my transgressions! I now lose you, when my fond hope had flattered me that I was going to be your's for ever. Dear Sir, cried he to his father, let me at least make reparation to this lady by dying her husband: and you, my ever adored charmer, consent to soften this last hour of pain with your compliance. My Lord, my dear Lord, cried I, live, and I shall be ever your own, my heart can entertain no other object but you. The father now interrupted, since, cried he, the lady consents, the greatest consolation I can receive is to see you both united. The priest for whom Mr. *Villebrun* has sent, shall perform the ceremony. You will then be all my own, cried the expiring youth with a stronger voice than before, and with a look of such pleasure, as gave us more hopes of his life than we had hitherto conceived. O heaven, cried he, I only ask life to consecrate it to the most innocent passion, and to every virtue which so refined a flame produces. Yet can my former excesses hope for pardon, Madam? Yes, my Lord, cried I, a tear from you is capable of effacing all your inconstancy, and that Being from whom you ask mercy, will, I hope, regard your petitions with equal tenderness.

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But let me entreat you to endeavour to be more calm.

FOR above an hour he continued seemingly at rest, his head reclined on his father's arm. This interval, alas, was only the forerunner of death : at the end of about two hours, during which we fondly hoped he was becoming more easy, he fetched a deep sigh, and feebly pressing my hand between his, adieu, Madam, cried he, with a faint voice, adieu for ever, I find myself dying. Pardon, my father, your unhappy son, a son useless to his country and his king, perfidious to his vows. I deserve not the tears which are shed for my fate ; I die the most resigned, the most——. A cold sweat now covered his face, his voice was stopped, and his eyes closed for ever. The father and I were torn from the lifeless corpse ourselves, almost in the same situation.

MR. *Villebrun* took me away in his chariot. I did not come to myself for three hours, and then found myself in bed, in the arms of my faithful Marchioness. They were apprehensive on account of my first transports, but grief had overpowered my strength. Without speaking a word, I hid my face, as if the light was grown insupportable. The marchioness has since assured me, that being apprehensive of this gloomy state of melancholy in which I seemed buried, she employed every art to call up my tears, by mentioning my lover's name in a manner the most tender. That at his name my tears would
stream,

stream, though in other respects I appeared insensible to every object around me. It was soon found that I was in a burning fever. In about five hours more my disorder encreased to a delirium; I repeated incessantly the name of my lover. At length, at the end of three days my physicians declared there were no hopes of my recovery. The violence of the fever abated in a settled weakness, which was judged to be fatal. When I had recovered my senses, my first emotions were those of sorrow. My lover is no more, cried I, yet still I live. The physician however, assured me that his assistance might be of service, if I would endeavour to calm my transports. Death would have been to me the most pleasing of all consolations; when life was proposed, I rejected with contempt all that could contribute to prolong an odious existence. No, cried I to my attendants, it can never be, that heavens desires to prolong a life of misery; let me then die, nature will soon bring on my dissolution; let my own hands be guiltless of my death, but let nature bring me that lenient balm for all my calamities.

Thus, Madam, I opposed their reasons; but the Marchioness, without having recourse to argument, only made use of tears and entreaties upon this occasion: I perceived her so sincerely touch'd with sorrow, that even from motives of friendship I was willing to prolong a life that seemed so dear to her. Softened by her endearments and caresses, I at length suffered myself to be persuaded; do with me
what

what you please, cried I, throwing myself into her arms, I shall live only to please you. From that moment she never quitted me, till at last, in about fifteen days, I was entirely out of danger.

I KNOW not if I am deceived; but I am apt to imagine, that those who are born with vigorous constitutions suffer much more from calamity, than they who naturally weak, sink under its pressure without any effort to sustain it. When the constitution is weakened, the sense of pain is diminished in proportion. My long disorder had reduced me to a state of apathic indifference; but in recovering my strength I again felt the loss of my lover as violently as as ever. The fatal moment in which I saw him expire, was again painted on my imagination, in the most hideous colours. But the faithful Marchioness, who never forsook me, poured the balm of friendship into all my wounds; she never attempted to dry up my tears by argument and reason, she mixed her sorrows with mine, and by sharing lessened them; she deplored my lover, and convinced me that I had gained a friend.

As soon as I was able to leave my chamber, Mr. *Villebrun* came to pay me a visit. He was touched with my affliction. After naturally describing the concern he felt for all I suffered, he asked if I had courage enough to support the sight of the unhappy father of my late lover, who was unwilling to leave *France* till he had seen me. I received the information with transport, and the next morning he

paid me a visit. We both remained some time silent, unable to give utterance to our feelings; tears were the only expression. He at last began the conversation, pressing my hand and calling me his dear daughter. Permit me, said he to mention you by no other name: had it pleased heaven you had been so sooner, then I might still have been a father. But I oppress you with my grief already, who are incapable of sustaining the weight of your own. Pardon an unhappy father, who can only talk of what he loves and what he has lost.

WHEN two souls are touch'd with the same distress, they find mutual comfort in mutual complaint. For three hours we entertained each other upon the subject of our unfortunate youth. Alas! cried his father, in the bitterness of his grief, it is I that have undone him. I had imputed his melancholy to the effects of a savage education, and in order to improve him, I endeavoured to introduce him among the follies and gaieties of life, or rather was ambitious of shewing his perfections to the polite world. His merit did not sufficiently please me unless it had admirers, but I soon found I had made a fatal judgment; for in proportion as he acquired a knowledge of the world he lost his virtues. Dazzled with his first successes, he no longer heard the voice of reason. His elevation of sentiment, and extent of understanding, only served to hasten his ruin. Once embarked in the sea of pleasure, nothing could stop him. Still, however, though a witness to his excesses, I perceived in him a fund of honour

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honour and good sense, which assured me that he would one day return to the principles of reason and virtue.

JUST heaven, continued the unfortunate parent, how unsearchable are thy decrees! when my son was reclaimed to virtue, then it was that I lost him. Did you only make him worthy of my regards, but to render my grief the more insupportable?

THIS old nobleman's grief touched me so sensibly, that I in some measure forgot my own. He lavished on me the tenderest caresses. My dear, my only child did he say, you are the only pledge he has left me. Your tenderness seems to bring him again to my view, I see his image impressed on your lovely bosom.

FOR a whole month he omitted not to pay me a daily visit; and took the usual methods of confirming my pretensions to the title of Lady B****. He seemed to find no consolation except in my company, and for my part I was equally consoled by his. Whatever our inclinations may be, there is a pleasure in pursuing the bent. The unhappy should avoid those who are pleased; if by complaints they interrupt that pleasure, they are guilty of injustice; if by suppressing their grief, they are only spectators of an happiness they partake not, their calamities are increased. My new acquired father made me repeat again and again my passion for his son, and his for me. Alas, cried he, how happy was my boy in that solitude where I first placed him! No happiness could surely be greater than what you now describe.

O nature,

O nature, how real are thy pleasures! how could my son ever forget those charming times? He now declaimed upon those illusions which art has reduced to system, of concealing the affections, and wearing the false appearance of pleasure and sincerity. Goodness, candour, truth, cried he, these are virtues banished from society. Seducing vices which have only put on the robe of rapture, such have undone my child; such have even silenced the calls of glory and of love. Nature had formed him generous and sensible. An intercourse with the world made him vain, perfidious, and only served to hasten his ruin!

NOTHING but the service of his King and country could avert this unhappy parent's thoughts from his loss. His patriotism was even stronger than his paternal tenderness. At the age of sixty, zeal for his Prince's service seemed to sparkle in his eye. In his warmth and impetuosity I easily perceived the violence of his son's disposition. This resemblance served to unite the bonds of friendship still more closely between us. When I called him father, I found myself inspired with the same tenderness as for him who gave me being. He on his side, gave me repeated assurances of true parental fondness, and even pressed me to share his fortune; for as he had designed the whole for his son, he added, that it was but just that I should participate. Yet in spite of all his efforts, I had generosity enough, or perhaps self-love sufficient to refuse his solicitations. Yet my refusal gave me some uneasiness.

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sinefs, as I found it really displeasing to him. But the pain of receiving fuch unmerited bounty was what I could not bear. I had too much pride to be always the party obliged, and was entirely divested of the vanity of wifhing to fhine in borrowed ornaments.

As I frequently mentioned my father-in-law's name to the Marchionefs, fhe had a defire to fee him: they foon entertained that sympathetic regard for each other, which is the natural refult of merit. As the trueft confolation is pity, my new parent was delighted with me, for bringing him acquainted with one who had fo charming a manner of testifying her sorrow. Mr. *Villebrun*, in order to comfort us all, and to reftore my health, invited us to a feat, which he had near *Paris*.

THAT taste for rural life, which was the bond of our little fociety, that confidence, which is the refult of mutual efteem, the country then drefled in all its beauty, in fome meafure ferved to lighten our sorrows, and gave them rather an air of melancholy than anguifh. We felt all the pleafure of being among friends who only ftudied our amufement. The whole party was engaged to ftay during the remainder of the fpring; but fome affairs of importance neceffarily calling off part of the company to *Paris*, we all took our leave and returned to the metropolis.

As affairs of ftate required my father's feparation, when he came to take his leave, I found my uneafinefs greater than it was poffible to describe. We promifed to correfpond
with

with each other till death; he assured me, that if ever he could taste the sweets of ease, he would come to end his life with a daughter whom he esteemed above all the rest of her sex. This part of his promise he was not able to perform, but his correspondence has since been a source of infinite delight: his letters were ever filled with expressions of the most sincere and tender friendship.

My separation from a friend so newly acquired, but so dearly loved, opened a new source of calamity. The whole universe now appeared one universal blank. I even endeavoured to avoid my dear Marchioness, conscious that I only gave her pain by the continuance of my sorrow, but she had too much tenderness to abandon me to myself: she expressed her concern in a manner so sensible and sincere, that I was induced to attach myself wholly to her, as my only support: as soon as her affairs, which Mr. *Villebrun* had solicited with indefatigable industry, were happily adjusted, I perceived a secret pleasure in thinking, that I was to leave a place in which I had experienced so much misery. My friend was the chief anchor I held by. After making therefore the necessary preparations we went down to her seat in the country, where for ten years I experienced no other satisfaction but what I felt in her friendship.

F I N I S.

